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C O M M U N I T Y

LOWDOWN



BRIAN FOX

Cover Queue

THOUGH IT'S LIKELY ALREADY 2013 BY THE TIME THIS HITS MAILBOXES AND NEWSSTANDS—

Happy New Year, Y'All!—we're still counting the days to the end of the year here at BASS PLAYER HQ. Not that we ever stop examining exactly what we are doing each month to bring you the best in bass, but it's a particularly reflective time of year. Many of you have answered my calls in past columns for your input on what you want to see in 2013. To all of you, Thanks. Lots of good ideas that I'm trying to get in the mag. Keep 'em coming!

One of the coolest—and toughest—things about this gig as editor is deciding who or what will be on the cover each month. Frankly, I'm proud of some of the risks we've taken in the last year or two, even if (or, especially since) they've ruffled the feathers of some of our grumpier readers. Even this month's choice of Bad Brains' Darryl Jenifer as the face of February carries some risk; to those who know him and his work, the choice will seem a no-brainer. But for true-blue bass geeks (I proudly count myself among you), there's no greater hero than Victor Wooten, right? How could we give the cover to a punk rocker and relegate Victor to a mere feature? I invite you to read both stories in hopes you will reach the same answer I did: Very easily. Though it might seem as if they come from entirely different musical universes—and in part, they do—they share not only a few key influences, but also a dedication to being as expressive as possible on their instruments of choice. There's lots of depth there, so dig in. Of course, there's lots more in this issue that I hope you will enjoy, so without further ado, get down on it!

BZ!!!
O—"

Oops!

We've dropped a couple clams in the last few issues—our apologies to all parties. Here are a few corrections.

January 2013

In our review of the Tech 21 VT Bass 1969, when we compared the amp's CHARACTER knob to the tone control on a bass, we kinda missed the mark. Rather, the third paragraph should read as such: "The CHARACTER knob works like a highly-specialized EQ that also controls the drive and changes the gain structure. In lower settings, it shifts the scoop of the midrange (from 500 to 800Hz, depending on the position).



In higher settings, it boosts the higher end of the midrange (from 1 to 2kHz, again depending on the position)." Also, the B410-VT cabinet has a power handling of 500 watts (not 400, as printed). **tech21nyc.com.**

◀ In the New Gear section, we ran the wrong photo to accompany the new Fodera Monarch Standard. Here's the correct pic. **fodera.com.**

December 2012

In our Soundroom review of the Acoustic B200 MKII combo, we mistakenly printed a street

price of \$490. The actual street price is \$450. **acousticamplification.com.**

Holiday 2012

In the Kala S-U-B U-Bass Soundroom review, we mistakenly reported that the bass features the same MiSiAlign preamp as its domestic counterpart. Rather, it features a custom Shadow U-Bass pickup and an electronic system designed to match it. **kalabrand.com.**



◀ In the New Gear section, we ran the wrong image to accompany the very hip Fuzzrocious Heliotropic fuzz pedal. Here's the correct image. **fuzzrociouspedals.com.**

COURT OF OPINION

Which albums/products are you most looking forward to in 2013?



Michael Manring is coming to Saskatchewan in April. I've been a giant fan since 1991, and have never seen or met him. It will be a landmark day for me. —**Dean Dynna**



Tool, in the studio now, creating an awesome album with J.C. laying down some awesome bass lines on his Wall! Can't wait! —**Rick Trevino**



The new Voivod. Jean-Yves "Blacky" Theriault and his signature Liberator "blower" bass returns after 17 years. —**Bill Goodwin**



Can't wait for the release of Hadrien Feraud's new album! —**Luis Brito**



Same as every year: a new Michael Manring album, and brighter-sounding strings. —**Claudio Barragan**



Dirty Loops and Louis Cole/Genevieve Artadi albums. —**Dorian Marcelja**



A new Black Sabbath album and anything Glenn Hughes does, solo or with Black Country Communion. —**Jeff Bangs**



The Kotzen/Portnoy/Sheehan CD and the PSMS live DVD. —**Mark Francis**



Misfits live, new Rob Zombie, new Black Veil Brides. —**Gerry Watts**



Fender's 2013 bass catalog, specifically, the Jamareo Artis signature bass and the Nik West signature line of Fender basses. —**Nate Claggett**



Oddfellows by Tomahawk. —**Little Rudecker Skiba**



Opposites by Biffy Clyro. Mon the Biff! —**Ben Hooper**



Necrophagia's *White Worm Cathedral*. —**John McNeil**



DIG MY RIG

After many years of playing and collecting instruments, this is where I am. It's a work in progress.

My basses, from left to right, are a 2007 Spector Legend, 1986 Ibanez Roadstar II 5-string, Squier Classic Vibe Jazz Bass, 1982 Fender American Precision, Ernie Ball Music Man StingRay 5, and fretless Michael Kelly Firefly acoustic bass guitar. My amps, from left to right, are a '59 Fender Bassman reissue, Ampeg SVT Classic on top of a Peavey 410TX, Fender Pro 300 and Traynor 8x10, Traynor XS800 Bassmaster head, 1989 Series 6 Trace Elliot AH300 head with 1989 Trace Elliot 1518 cab, 1968 Traynor YBA-2A Bassmate head, 1972 Traynor YBA-1 Bassmaster head, and a 1968 Traynor YS-15 cab, which is a match for the '68 Bassmate. I can play pretty much any venue around here. Big or small, the bass will be there. — PAT PEARSON

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Strings, etc. Ernie Ball Super Slinky

Heroes & Inspiration Matthew Garrison, Mike Pope, Tony Grey, Tom Kennedy

Contact Facebook.com/bassicallyme, reverbnation.com/jermainehall, magneto081@yahoo.com

How did you come to play bass?

I started playing when I was eight years old. My father, who is a guitarist, had purchased a Fender Musicmaster bass, and when he saw that I was very intrigued by it, he taught me the basics. I was actually planning on being a pro wrestler, but my parents weren't supportive of that decision, of course. After grueling weeks of lessons and practice, I became the bassist for my father's gospel quartet.

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

Through dozens of life-changing experiences, I have learned that if you truly decide to make music your career, you have to be prepared for the ups and downs. Always strive to learn the lessons that those ups and downs may bring instead of becoming bitter and wanting to throw in the towel.

What are your musical goals?

I ultimately want to get into the production side of things in every aspect. Also, I want to get into doing more clinics and workshops just to share what has been given to me musically. Last, I would love to sit in a few classes with my heroes—those guys are the best!



Want to introduce yourself? Find submission guidelines at bassplayer.com/february2013. Get selected for The Real World and receive a set of D'Addario EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit will receive D'Addario's FretBuzz newsletter.



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-Tim Landers

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TIMELINE

This Month In Bass History **February**

- 1ST** Rick James born, **1948**.
- 2ND** Journey bassist Ross Valory born, **1949**. Robert DeLeo of Stone Temple Pilots born, **1966**.
- 3RD** Hollies bassist Eric Haydock born, **1943**. New York Dolls Arthur 'Killer' Kane born, **1949**.
- 5TH** Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan born, **1964**.
- 6TH** Everett Hull files a patent for his amplified bass peg, paving the way for Ampeg, **1946**.
- 9TH** Count Basie Orchestra bassist Walter Page born, **1900**.
- 10TH** Jazz bassist and educator Rufus Reid born, **1944**. Metallica bassist Cliff Burton born, **1962**.
- 12TH** Three Dog Night's Joe Schermie born, **1945**. Producer/bassist Bill Laswell born, **1955**. Barenaked Ladies bassist Jim Creeggan born, **1970**.
- 13TH** Foreigner bassist Ed Gagliardi born, **1952**. Joy Division and New Order bassist Peter Hook born, **1956**. Tony Butler of Big Country born, **1957**.
- 21ST** Jean-Jacques Burnel of the Stranglers born, **1952**.
- 24TH** Steve Miller Band's Lonnie Turner born, **1947**.
- 26TH** Rage Against The Machine bassist Tim Commerford born, **1968**.

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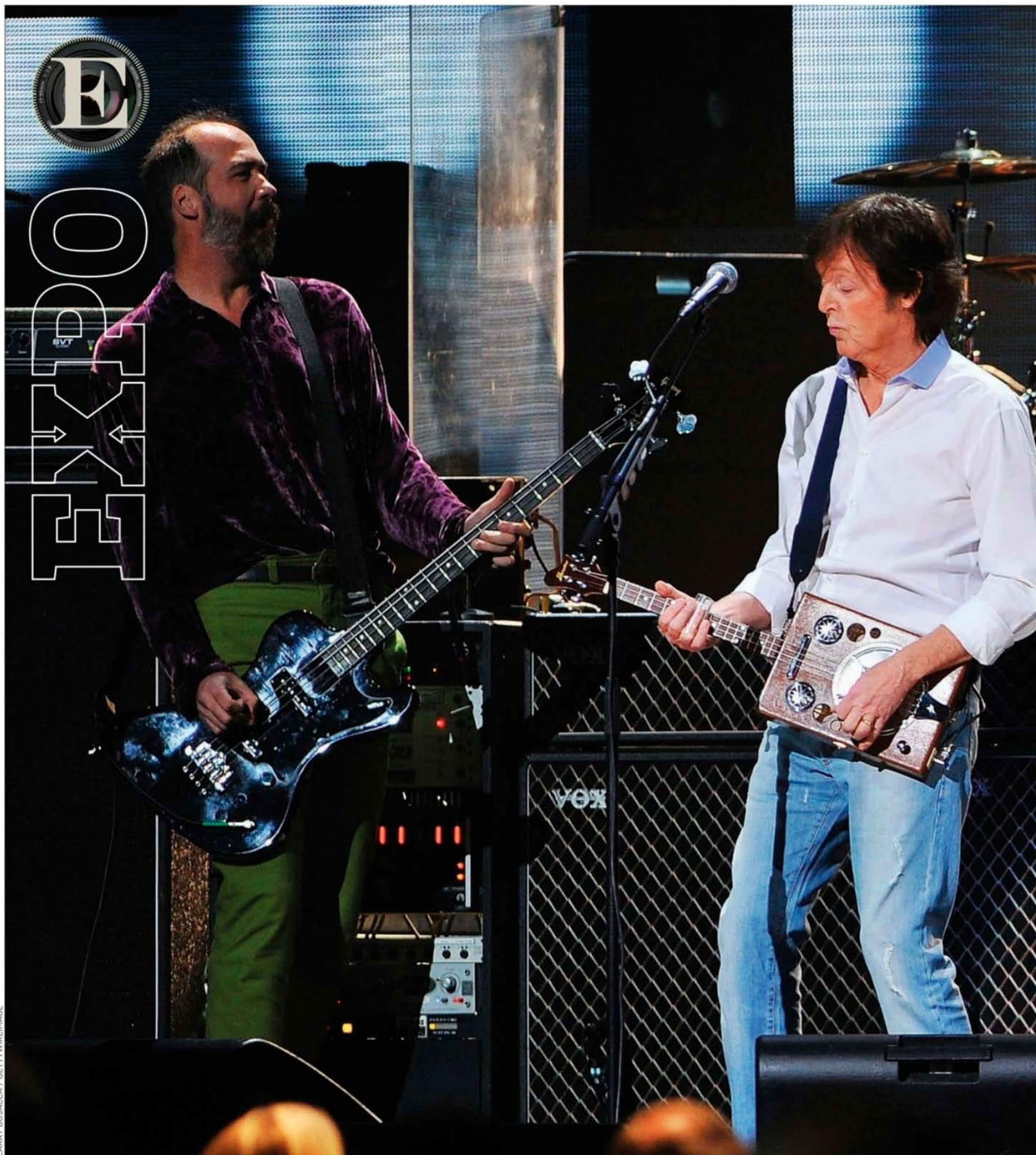
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LARRY BUSACCA / GETTYWIREIMAGE



Smells Like Team Spirit

During his set at the 12-12-12 Concert for Sandy relief, Paul McCartney invited Nirvana founders Krist Novoselic (left) and Dave Grohl (right) to play the new song "Cut Me Some Slack," from Grohl's upcoming documentary, *Sound City—Real to Reel*.



BASSNOTES

WILLIE'S NERVE CLINIC

Dirk Lance In-Your-Face Bass

BY FREDDY VILLANO

BEING IN A BAND IS TOUGH. JUST ASK WILLIE'S NERVE CLINIC BASSIST

Dirk Lance (né Alex Katunich), who left his previous band, Incubus, at the peak of its success. "It's like being married to four other people," he confesses. "When your band makes its living touring and you spend ten months out of the year together, it gets trying." After 12 years of touring and recording, Lance says Incubus reached a point where the writing was on the wall. "We were going in different directions, personality-wise and musically. If there was ever a time to get off the roller coaster, it was going to be at the top."

Dirk's in-your-face bass playing on the singles "Pardon Me," "Stellar," and "Drive," all from Incubus' landmark third album, *Make Yourself* [Immortal, 1999], made him one of the most emulated bassists of his generation. Now Lance is back in a new band, Willie's Nerve Clinic, with a new CD, *Vampire Kiss*, and certain to get the bass world buzzing again.

Did you take lessons when you were a kid?

My parents agreed to get me lessons, and they rented me a bass for a month before committing to the idea of buying something, because they weren't sure I was going to stick with it. And after a month of taking lessons with Stray Deuce, the guitarist and singer in Willie's Nerve Clinic, I was hooked. The only way they could punish me through junior high and high school was to take away the bass; there was nothing else in my life that mattered.

Who were some of your early influences?

At that particular time I was listening to a lot of heavy music—rock, for the most part. Guns N' Roses was definitely a big influence, and Duff McKagan was one of the few rock bass players you could actually hear. Coming into high school, I discovered the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primus, and Mr. Bungle. I liked bands that had a really active bass player; I had the personality of a guitar player, and my playing took on that in-your-face style. I didn't necessarily have the talent to pull it off, but it was all about the attitude and being able to sell it.

Was leaving Incubus a difficult decision?

It might have been difficult if success had come overnight and we were right in the middle of just hitting. But we started as such young kids and grew up playing together and watched the incremental growth—it was a natural point to part ways at that time. That's not to say there wasn't more that could have been achieved, but I personally felt as if I didn't leave anything on the field. In a sport analogy sense, I had already won the Super Bowl. There weren't any "What if?" questions left to answer. We got there.

What did you do between Incubus and Willie's Nerve Clinic?

I started a company to do music for video games. That evolved into a company that was doing streaming radio into video games. I wanted to stay involved in music, but the idea of joining another band and going back out on tour didn't appeal to me. I went back to my old bass teacher [Stray] and said, "I don't really need lessons on playing bass—I've got that

INFO

Willie's Nerve Clinic,
Vampire Kiss
[williesnerveclinic.com,
2012]



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Strings Ernie Ball Regular Slinky Bass 5 (.045-.130)

Check out the live video "Don't Rescue Me." bassplayer.com/february2013





part covered—but I want to become a better musician.” So I took guitar and theory lessons from him until he asked, “Why don’t we just start a band, so we can put all of this practical knowledge into something that’s fun for both of us?”

During the writing process, how do you arrive at moments like the bass solo in “Sing Like You’re Dangerous”?

It tends to be organic; I’m under no illusion that people really need to hear me solo. The verse riff had a nice rhythm for something percussive. I was just messing around with it one day, and Stray was encouraging me to go crazy for a few bars. So I did. As with most of the stuff that I do, there are quite a few notes on the record—maybe a few too many!

What was your approach to tracking bass on *Vampire Kiss*?

I almost always do a combination; I want a clean

DI tone that emphasizes what the bass itself sounds like, so usually a tube DI and then into a nice warm preamp like a Neve, if possible. Each bass has frequencies it recreates well, and there are certain frequencies that the DI won’t grab, so we almost always mic a cabinet so we can mix and match those sonic qualities, as well.

There’s online chatter about what pickups and preamps you use in your basses. Care to share any trade secrets?

I never changed anything from what was standard. Whatever I recorded on 15 years ago was what was in the bass. My tone is more a function of where I placed your thumb and how I balanced my pickups and attack more than anything else. I just play really hard. I wish I could say I was more of a finesse player, but attack is just something that’s been beaten into me by 20 years of trying to make sure I’m heard. The interesting thing about the Warwick is that it allows you to adjust the nut height, so I could change the string height depending on the gauge of the string. I could dial it in exactly the way I wanted so I could play as hard as I wanted without having to worry about string-buzz slap back against the pickups.

What advice do you have for our readers?

Listen to bass players in different genres. One of my biggest handicaps is that I played with the same people for so long. Expanding your palette musically, by listening to the inflections and phrases other bass players use, is one of the best ways to expand your playing. **BP**



Alphonso Johnson

BY CHRIS JISI |



In the coming months, we'll be kicking down highlights from the 16 clinic spots from BASS PLAYER LIVE! 2012. We're already putting together next year's BPL, so plan on joining us next October in Los Angeles!

IT'S ALWAYS AN HONOR TO HAVE A PAST BASS PLAYER

Lifetime Achievement Award recipient return for a BASS PLAYER LIVE! clinic—especially when that person is Alphonso Johnson. Alphonso has committed to the teaching side of his career with the same passion that has marked his groundbreaking playing career as a solo artist and with Weather Report, Santana, George Duke, Phil Collins, and many others. Johnson began by encouraging questions from the audience. He then warmed up the capacity crowd with a fretless acoustic bass guitar-and-tracks performance of his tune “Nova Iguaçu,” named after a ghetto town in Rio de Janeiro.

THE RIGHT STUFF

Alphonso's first focus was on having good practice habits. He noted the common tendency to practice

“the easy stuff” with the assumption that it will make the “difficult stuff” easier. The truth, he reminded, was the other way around. He also demonstrated—via some of the interval and scale studies he gives his students at Cal Arts and USC—the inclination to go back to the beginning when making a mistake in the middle of a scale or exercise. Instead, he makes his students restart right at the point where they made the error. In addition, he offered his basic warmup, which is to play scales from the lowest to highest notes on his instrument, so as not to fall into left-hand patterns.

GROOVE THERAPY

To provide a musical aspect for practice studies, Johnson has his students do what he calls “Groove Therapy.” The concept, which he demonstrated using GarageBand, is to get a scale or cycle of arpeggios in mind, choose a drum loop and a percussion loop, and pick a syncopation to play the passage over, against the loops. He also postulated that playing bass is like being the key-stone at the top of an archway. He smiled, “To the left of the stone is all the harmonic data we have to know, and to the right is all the rhythmic data. So as bassists we have to multi-task.”

INTONATION ROCKS

The first attendee question concerned fretless bass intonation. Alphonso pointed out that each instrument is different and individual, including his fretless Warwick Alien 5-string acoustic bass guitar, which he had been playing for only a few weeks. The first step he takes is to find all the G, D, A, and E notes on the fingerboard, followed by trying some scales and working his way up to playing all the notes chromatically, while checking pitches against open strings. “Sometimes it's a matter of just rocking your fingertip a little,” he allowed. From there, he recommended playing double-stops, starting with 5ths.

HEAD-HANDS-SING

An attendee asked about the ultimate challenge of being able to play what he hears in his head. Johnson advised using a gradual process where you sing a phrase and try to identify the notes and intervals in relation to each other. The next step, he said, is to bring that to your instrument, with the ultimate goal of being able to sing what you are playing while on the bandstand.

THREE IS A MAGIC NUMBER

Another attendee asked about playing sambas and other Latin grooves. Alphonso pointed to the tendency of good samba bassists to accent beat *three* in their patterns, to match the deep *surdo* drum that serves as the heartbeat of the music. He also recommended *The Latin Bass Book*, by Oscar Stagnaro, *True Cuban Bass*, by Carlos del Puerto, and the Sergio Mendes album *Brasileiro* [Elektra, 1992], for which Mendes visited different regions to record native music and rhythms.

DRILL DEEPER

In closing, Johnson stressed having a clear sense of what you're going to practice, and not being afraid to drill yourself when you run into trouble spots. He also noted the importance of good time management in our daily lives. For those in attendance, the hour was definitely well spent. **BP**

INFO

Watch Alphonso Johnson's BPL! 2012 clinic in its entirety.
bassplayer.com/video

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CHRIS ROBINSON BROTHERHOOD

Mark Dutton

Woody Wood Picker

BY JIMMY LESLIE | PHOTO BY KERRI KELTING



“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN

learn is how to fill in the blanks on the bottom end of a song in such a way that makes it come across better,” says “Muddy” Mark Dutton. “It took me a very long time.” Dutton co-founded Burning Tree in the late ’80s, and he credits his experience producing the Brian Jonestown Massacre for enabling him to scope the entire sonic picture on his current gig playing cosmic cowboy rock with the Chris Robinson Brotherhood. Dutton dutifully holds down the fort until Robinson encourages the whole unit to spread its wings, at which point Dutton trades his straightforward approach and time-honored wooden tone for myriad plucking-hand attacks and psychedelic sounds.

Why do you play vintage Kay basses?

Chris asked me that, too: “Why don’t you play a ‘real’ bass instead of an ol’ covered wagon?” Well, I love the sound of old wooden instruments, and I actually dig the wonkiness of Kays from the ’50s and ’60s. I had to learn how to approach them, because they don’t have as much sustain or the even, solid sound of, say, a Precision Bass. Old Kays have small necks and a low pickup output that’s prone to feedback, but those unpredictable functional limitations force me to come up with something original and organic. I live for those magic moments when the feedback is just right. I hit my delay pedal and I’m off.

How do you use various plucking approaches to

get the tones you want?

Plucking-hand attack and release means everything in terms of delivering the right feel to make a song sound great, so I’ll vary my approach—to the point of playing fingerstyle on one section and with a pick on another part of the same song, for a sharper attack. “Rosalee” and “Star or Stone” are good examples.

I put the heaviest D’Addario flatwounds I can find on my bass because I like to feel the connection of my finger or my pick hitting strings without ridges. I compensate for flatwound mushiness by boosting my treble and using hard wooden or metal picks.

Why not use conventional picks?

I don’t like the feel of plastic in my hand, or the sound of plastic on the strings, so I had my dad start making me wooden picks. We eventually settled on bamboo. A plastic pick’s flexibility forces you to move your hand dramatically. A comparatively inflexible wooden pick or an even more rigid metal pick facilitates a more aggressive sound that reflects all the subtle nuances of your grip and how you pluck the strings.

Why play a vintage wooden instrument with something synthetic? It’s an abomination! Wooden picks resonate with the instrument. Sometimes I’ll even use a rosewood pick in order to match the Kay’s fingerboard and bridge material. I feel more spiritually and cosmically connected to the bass using an organic pick. It sounds analog. It sounds natural. **BP**

i INFO

Chris Robinson Brotherhood, *The Magic Door* [Silver Arrow, 2012]; *Big Moon Ritual* [Silver Arrow, 2012]

LISTEN



EQUIP

Basses Vintage Kay basses

Rig Fender Bassman 100 head, Ampeg 8x10 cabinet

Effects Dunlop UV1 Uni-Vibe, MXR Carbon Copy Analog Delay, MXR Bass Envelope Filter, Analog Man distortion prototype, Dunlop 105Q Cry Baby Bass Wah

Strings D’Addario Chromes Flatwound

Picks Custom bamboo and rosewood

Roland on BTB

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BP RECOMMENDS


HIROMI: THE TRIO PROJECT
LIVE IN MARCIAC, MOVE [Telarc]

What has **Anthony Jackson** been up to lately? Telarc's DVD and CD one-two punch allows us to see and hear the contrabass master on what continues to be his main gig, with Japanese keyboard virtuoso Hiromi. Her command of straight-ahead piano trio, odd-time fusion, Latin, and classical, with a dose of Ahmad Jamal pop-jazz elegance is right in the wheelhouse of Jackson and drum force Simon Phillips. On the well-shot-and-edited DVD, with most of its material drawn from Hiromi's 2011 disc, *Voice*, the visual aspect is especially enhancing. All three musicians exchange knowing looks that allude to the intense musical mind-reading going on, and watching the dexterity and commitment with which Anthony coaxes every note from his 6-string is both revealing and inspiring. In addition to providing his one-of-a-kind spontaneous groove prowess throughout, via pick-and-flanger or thumb-and-palm-mute, Jackson trades solo lines with Hiromi on "Delusion" and "Now or Never," and takes a chord-infused solo on "Joy."

Move is Hiromi's vibrant new studio CD, written with her trio members in mind. And fully engaged they are, right from the stabbing, odd-meter ostinato of the opening title track. Jackson has pick-and-flanger step-outs on "Endeavor" and "Margarita," and really shows his range on the three-part "Suite Escapism." The second movement, "Fantasy," finds Anthony using his volume pedal to express the haunting melody Ondes Martenot-style, while "In Between," the final movement, is pure thunder. State-of-the-art playing meets state-of-the-art recording. —**Chris Jisi**


DOUG JOHNS
BLOMP! [dougjohns.com]

On his fourth CD, **Doug Johns** doesn't change what ain't broken: He's still super funky, still up in the mix, still surrounded by great players, and still using hellacious chops in the service of feel-good tracks with roots in the '70s. His drum programming on eight of the ten songs nods to the greats, too, and his solo bass piece, "For Andy," is a perfect showcase for his soulful, mellower side.

—**E.E. Bradman**


VIJAY IYER TRIO
ACCELERANDO [ACT]

Like the Bad Plus and Robert Glasper, this trio makes improvised music that's harmonically interesting yet still accessible and not unaware of the 21st century. **Stephan Crump**'s upright is upfront and deeply grooving, and the three-way interplay is top notch. Highlights include the shifting meters on the title track, as well as the trio's takes on Michael Jackson's "Human Nature" and the Flying Lotus/Thundercat gem "Mmmhmm." —**E.E. Bradman**


THE NEW ORLEANS SUSPECTS
THE NEW ORLEANS SUSPECTS

[neworleanssuspects.com]

If you've missed note-perfect, old-school P-Bass grooves without thick, modern low end, this one's for you. This quintet, anchored by Radiators bass master **Reggie Scanlon** and long-time Neville Brothers drummer Willie Green, skips egos and attitudes and delivers feel-good music that's split between classics and new tunes that sound like classics. —**E.E. Bradman**


SMOKE AND JACKAL
EP NO. 1 [RCA]

This six-song, bass-heavy slab from Kings of Leon's **Jared Followill** and Mona guitarist/singer Nick Brown is soaked with moody modern rock, spacey organ, and minor-key progressions—perfect for cross-country drives and dark living rooms with subwoofers. Recommended for fans of U2, atmospheric dub, and electronica. —**E.E. Bradman**

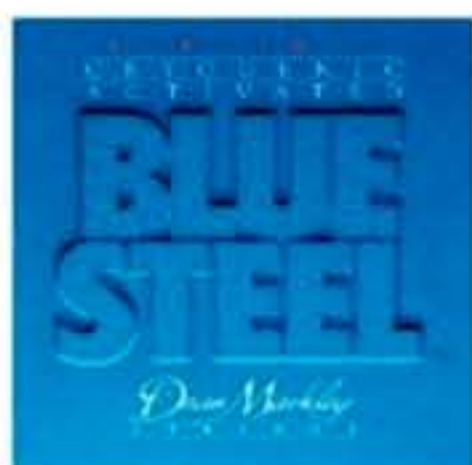

EBERHARD WEBER
RESUMÉ [ECM]

For this lush recording, German electric upright grandmaster **Eberhard Weber** added drums, percussion, sax, flute, and keys to 12 lengthy unaccompanied solos he took while on tour between 1990 and 2007. Each piece, named for the city in which he took the central solo, still features his distinctive melodic sense and mid-range tone, but the colors added by frequent bandmates Jan Garbarek and Michael DiPasqua are warm, sensitive, and complementary. —**E.E. Bradman**

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Contact ehx.com

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First-tier touring ace Tony Levin has been forging his own path on a Music Man bass for, well, as long as we can remember, so it's no surprise that he's come up with a finish you can see from the back row. Ernie Ball/Music Man's Sledge Bass is a Classic 4- and 5-string Stingray—or a newly re-released 21-fret Sabre, with 11" neck radius and compensated nut on a Classic-style neck—dressed with a custom metallic flake finish. All Sledge basses have birdseye maple necks with high-gloss polyester finishes, maple or rosewood fingerboards, Alnico humbucking pickups wired in parallel with a 5-way switch, a 2-band EQ, a proprietary Silent Circuit, and a certificate signed by Levin.

Street Classic Stingray 4, \$2,970; Classic Stingray 5, \$3,220; Sabre, \$3,070

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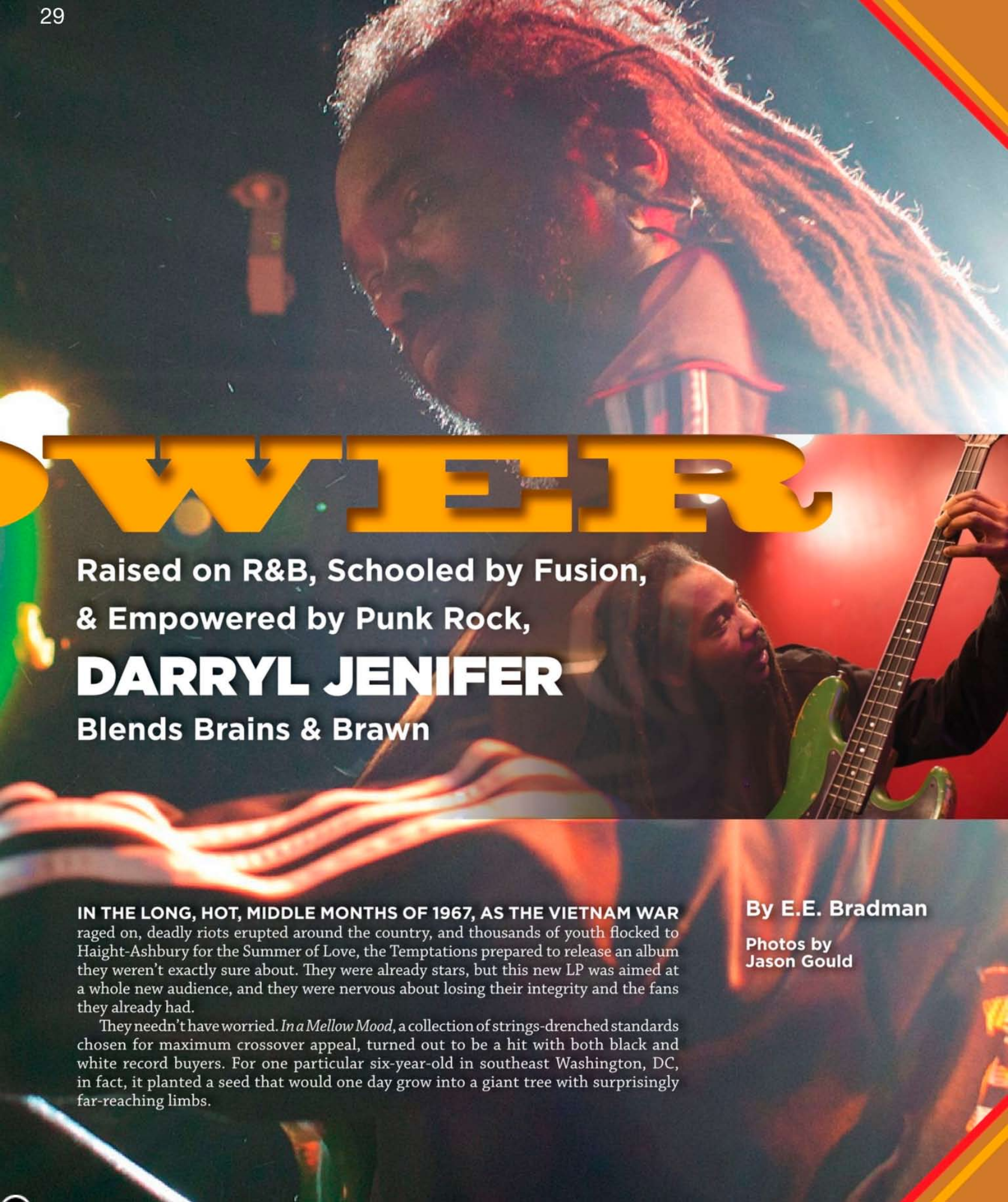
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Vivid EPO



DARRYL JENIFER

Raised on R&B, Schooled by Fusion,
& Empowered by Punk Rock,

DARRYL JENIFER

Blends Brains & Brawn

IN THE LONG, HOT, MIDDLE MONTHS OF 1967, AS THE VIETNAM WAR raged on, deadly riots erupted around the country, and thousands of youth flocked to Haight-Ashbury for the Summer of Love, the Temptations prepared to release an album they weren't exactly sure about. They were already stars, but this new LP was aimed at a whole new audience, and they were nervous about losing their integrity and the fans they already had.

They needn't have worried. *In a Mellow Mood*, a collection of strings-drenched standards chosen for maximum crossover appeal, turned out to be a hit with both black and white record buyers. For one particular six-year-old in southeast Washington, DC, in fact, it planted a seed that would one day grow into a giant tree with surprisingly far-reaching limbs.

By E.E. Bradman

Photos by
Jason Gould



Four and a half decades later, Darryl Jenifer still remembers how James Jamerson's bass lines on Copacabana-ready classics like "Hello Young Lovers," "Ol' Man River," and a pre-Stevie Wonder version of "For Once In My Life" opened his ears and set him on a path toward a once-in-a-lifetime crossover of his own. As a member of Bad Brains and one of the co-creators of a daringly original brew of reggae, punk, soul, and fusion, Jenifer has inspired musicians on every point around the color wheel, providing a shining example to artists who express their influences in fresh ways and play multiple styles with conviction and intensity.

Jenifer's musical journey, which began with a 1964 James Brown concert at DC's Howard Theatre and his introduction to Jamerson three years later, continued in the early '70s with rhythm guitar gigs in neighborhood funk and R&B bands. As a devoted member of the Stanley Clarke fan club, Jenifer was invited to join jazz-fusion group Mind Power with friends Earl Hudson, Hudson's brother HR, and Gary "Dr. Know" Miller, taking over bass duties from HR. The band had dreams of becoming the next Return To Forever, but there was a new fever sweeping the land in 1977. When friend Sid McCray introduced Mind Power to punk rock, Jenifer dove in headfirst and renamed the band after the Ramones song "Bad Brain."



Darryl Jenifer in the studio, circa 1985

LUCIAN PERKINS

Few could have predicted what came next. Jenifer married his love of complex fusion with a knack for aggressive English punk, perfecting a scorching style that blended Stanley-inspired double-stops, riffs that recalled Black Sabbath, and a precise intensity that was several notches above his contemporaries. A chance encounter with Bob Marley in 1978 turned the Brains on to reggae, and their first two albums—their 1982 self-titled debut and 1983's *Rock for Light*—are certified punk-and-reggae classics that kick-started the American hardcore scene and inspired genre-straddling heavyweights such as Fishbone, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sublime, the Beastie Boys, Nirvana, Living Colour, and No Doubt.

I Against I (1986) and *Quickness* (1989) turned up the hard rock and metal quotients, and when the Hudson brothers occasionally left to pursue other projects, Jenifer and Dr. Know maintained the brand, sometimes working with other singers and drummers. The late Beastie Boys bassist Adam "MCA" Yauch produced 2007's *Build a Nation*, the Brains' eighth studio release and their first album of original material in 12 years.

Contrary to taking it easy between tours, however, Jenifer did studio bass work for Rick Ocasek, Lil' Jon, and Jonathan Richman, as well as producing tracks in his upstate New York studio for Bedouin Soundclash, Stiffed, Shwayze, and Sublime. By 2010, he had landed a gig with Lauryn Hill and released a solo album,



Verdine White
NEON

Stanley Clarke
Hi-Beam

Janice Marie Johnson
Hi-Beam

Jonas Hellborg
Signature

Sting
Lo-Rider

Boo

The Hundred Percenter

An Appreciation By Fishbone's Norwood Fisher

"We heard about Bad Brains sometime around '79 or '80, and we couldn't believe they were black. We were young musicians trying to find ourselves, and hearing a black band do something like that allowed us to own punk rock. That was important.

"Darryl was rippin' it, pullin' chords, and his playing was airtight. He was solid, fluid, so fast, and he made it look effortless. I didn't hear the sound of struggle, I heard somebody nailing it. I didn't notice the fusion influence back then, but it totally makes sense. The funny thing is that I was listening to bands like Return To Forever, too, but Bad Brains and the Clash pulled me away from that; they spoke to my excess teenage energy much more than fusion did.

"When we did the *Licensed to Ill* tour in 1987 with Murphy's Law and



Norwood Fisher

the Beastie Boys, MCA would be playing Bad Brains songs at soundcheck, and he knew Darryl's lines backward and forward. That was the first time I clearly heard all the chords Darryl was pulling and the intricate stuff he was doing, because some of the earliest recordings didn't display it well. MCA was playing with a pick, and killin' it!

"Last night, watching them play the first couple shows of the new tour, I saw a band appreciating each other, the music, and the

audience. They give of themselves, they were enjoying themselves, and it was awesome. And Darryl does not disappoint. He's a 100 percenter! His production on the new album is incredible—I think that as a producer, songwriter, and bass player, he's coming into an amazing space. I look at him and wish for more output." —AS TOLD TO E.E. BRADMAN



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MADE IN U.S.A.
Sunbeam

Fieldy
NEON

Geezer Butler
Black Beauty



In *Search of Black Judas*, that showcased his deep knowledge of various reggae styles and his plentiful production chops.

It makes perfect sense, therefore, that Jenifer is in the producer's seat for the Brains' latest, *Into the Future*. Like most of their catalogue, it dips into hardcore, reggae, and hard rock/metal, but Jenifer's production brings the band deeper into

the 21st century while showcasing each player's strengths, including his own. His airtight mind-meld with Hudson on songs like "Yes I," "Come Down," and "Suck Sess" is custom-built to invoke mosh-pit chaos, while his front-pickup tone occupies a perfect space underneath Dr. Know's thick guitars on rockers like "Fun" and "Earnest Love." Meanwhile, his choices on the album's

reggae grooves, including the old-school "Make a Joyful Noise," the dubby neck-snapper "Jah Love," the funky "Rub a Dub Love," and the loving send-off to Yauch, "MCA Dub," are a master class in taste and tone.

Despite the bumpy journey the Bad Brains have endured, Jenifer is far from bitter that they haven't achieved the mainstream success many fans envisioned for them. His confidence about the band's place in history hasn't stopped him from pursuing new challenges, though, and his ability to stay inspired while doing justice to the group's legacy makes Jenifer uniquely prepared to take Bad Brains past the naysayers, and far into the future.

When Bad Brains hit the ground running, who were your rock bass influences?

There weren't many, but I was way into John Paul Jones and Geezer Butler. That "doomsday riff" in "How Low Can a Punk Get," from our second album, was inspired by my love for Black Sabbath songs like "Sweet Leaf" and "Iron Man." And I dug what Captain Sensible from the Damned did on "Machine Gun Etiquette." Later on, I was into what Kip Winger was doing.

Wait ... Winger?

[Laughs.] I liked some of what I heard him do in the context of the pop-metal Winger was playing.

Back in the day, you were listening to fusion, too, right?

I got really deep into Stanley Clarke—at a certain period of my life in the '70s, I was into dudes like Stanley, Percy Jones, and Jaco Pastorius. When we started out as Mind Power, we were going to be a new Mahavishnu or a baby Return To Forever.

How did the arrival of punk rock change your feelings about fusion?

When punk rock came in, I realized I didn't have to know how to play in order to express myself on my instrument. That empowered me, because I could be creative in any way I wanted to. Punk rock taught me that I could be somebody in music without being a virtuoso.

Did the band's love for fusion find its way into the music?

"Regulator" is my punk-rock version of a line from Weather Report's "Mr. Gone." "Pay to Cum" was inspired by a George Duke song. The intro to "Don't Need It" is us being punk, but still wanting to play our instruments well.

When I look back now, I can see that the Great Spirit inspired us to do things like put a Stevie Wonder-style ending on "Sailing On." We were

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naïve and fearlessly creative. It wasn't contrived, either—we weren't sitting around somewhere thinking about mixing styles. We loved punk rock, we loved fusion, and we wanted to make our own brand.

How did reggae and Rastafari become such a big part of Bad Brains?

In 1978, I went to see Stanley at the Capital Center in DC, and after the show, I got his autograph on a dollar bill. Behind him, onstage, was this dude with big dreadlocks, and I couldn't believe that black people could grow their hair that long. I didn't even know who Bob Marley was, and to tell you the truth, I didn't know he was playing. I was there to see Stanley Clarke. When the Wailers began playing, I was complaining that Family Man Barrett's bass was too loud, but then I got absorbed into the music, and I started to feel the magic. That was the beginning of our journey into Rasta culture.

When you got serious about reggae, how did you learn to play it with authenticity?

I didn't just listen to the music or the bass line—I thought about the people playing it. I listened to Family Man and Flabba Holt and Lloyd Parks and learned the differences between reggae, rub-a-dub, sound system, and ska. If you want to play music that encompasses different styles, take time to learn the differences, and think about the players. If you want to play Earth, Wind & Fire's music, for example, you have to look at Verdine White's personality and how he approaches his bass lines.

What do you listen for when you're learning a new style?

It's all about texture and attack. Is the bass player using a two-finger walk or a one-finger claw? How many fingers are they using on the left hand? Are they playing the bass line on just one string? To get the right sound, pay attention to how many fingers you're using and which part of your fingers are touching the strings. At the same time, you can't lay down weight if your playing is too "studied." There's an unstudied type of locomotion to the rub-a-dub style, and there is a sort of nimbleness, too, like the Lloyd Parks sound.

What's the advantage of nailing the little things?

There's a difference between imitating stuff, like a wedding-band musician, and really playing something. I can play punk rock, I can play with Metallica, or I could play with the Wailers and not

be imitating anyone, because I have lived those styles.

Do you care about those details in your own playing?

Yes. Being heard over and under Dr. Know's wall of guitar, for example, has a lot to do with how I approach single notes, when I drop to the

octave, when I hit those 1st-and-5th double-stops. I'm selective about when I flip it, pick it, and downstroke it, know what I'm saying? I try to be creative with textures and double-stops, which I learned mainly from listening to Stanley Clarke, like the way he did it on "School Days."

When did you settle on the perfect

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A monster tone-shaping pre-amp that doubles as a full-featured direct box, Hartke's Bass Attack Pedal offers expanded control over the tone of any bass rig. From the grittiest of metal sounds to the warmest of rock tones, this pedal provides endless possibilities for attaining a more powerful, full-range bass tone.

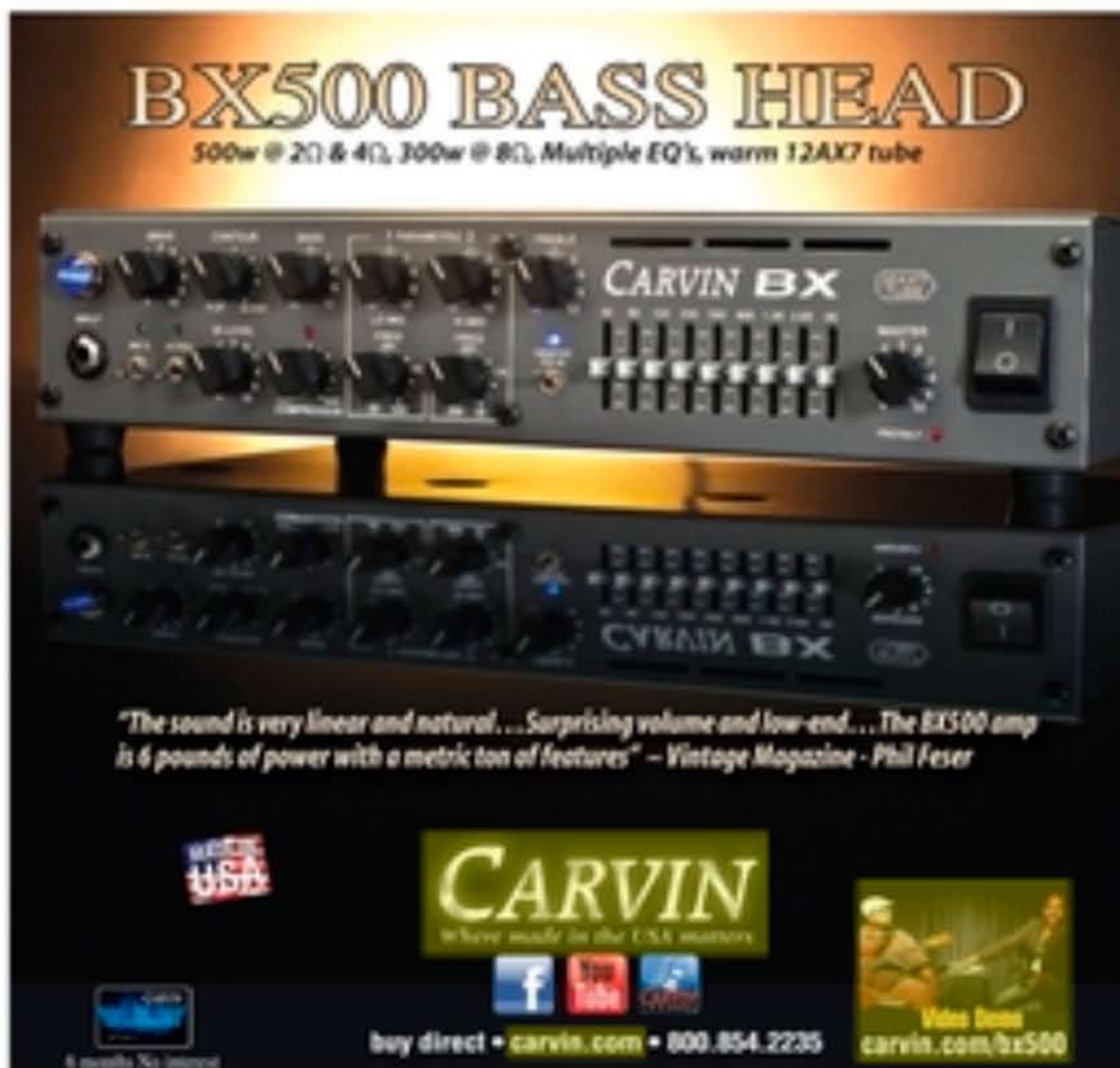
David Ellefson of **MEGADETH**

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CS DARRYL JENIFER



instrument and amp for Bad Brains?

For the first couple years, most of the basses I played were borrowed from people in bands that opened for us, but I got my first real bass, a Fender Jazz Bass, around 1980. I was never that much into equipment—give me a Jazz Bass, Rotosound strings, a cable, a .60mm Dunlop pick, and an Ampeg SVT, and I'm done. I never wanted any pedals between me and my amp, and I still don't. I believe in relying on my fingers and my bass to get the sounds I need.

Seems like that green Modulus has been your main axe for years.

I got it when we were on 48th Street in New York in 1980 or '81. I was pretty abusive to my basses, sort of a rebel youth thing, and I didn't want a bass



**“DON’T TREAT
MUSIC LIKE
A HOBBY, OR
ELSE IT’LL
SOUND LIKE
IT’S A HOBBY.”**

that would be so sensitive to cold weather, with the neck warping and things like that. So when I saw the Modulus, with its carbon fiber neck, I figured it would be durable enough to survive the cold or whatever happened onstage. The beautiful thing about this Modulus is that every time I pick it up, it feels as new as the day I got it.

How do you go back and forth between strong rock and deep dub tones?

With the Modulus, I can get a sustained, solid sound when I play power chords with a pick, and then I can tuck the pick away, move up the fretboard, and thump on some rub-a-dub. This bass has a real resonance, a deep tone, to it. With Rotosounds, the Badass bridge, and EMG pickups, I plug into an SVT and have a nice foundation

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MUSIC MAN**
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for rock stuff—but when I want rub-a-dub, all I have to do is roll off the high end, move up on the neck, and do the one-finger claw like Jamerson. My soundman, Andy Stackpole, helps, too. We've worked together for 20-something years, so he knows how and when I'm trying to fill the room.

When I saw you with Lauryn Hill, you covered the bottom end on a 5-string while

Doug Wimbish added effects and upper-register soundscapes.

I played a 5-string with Ms. Hill and I liked it, but it didn't feel like a real bass: I'm a 4-string purist. Doug is my man, and one of my inspirations. I think we'll probably do some more stuff like that.

What's it like to play with Earl Hudson after all these years?

Earl is like my big brother. When we were younger, we were like a dance team on *Dancing With the Stars*: "You're going too fast!" "You spun me around!" [Laughs.] But all that struggle between us forged a brotherhood that has made us a locomotive force. Mackie [Jayson], who played with us on *Quickness* in 1989, is another one—we grew up in this together. When I play with other drummers, it can be good, but it's not the same because we haven't put in enough time to develop the chemistry.

What inspired you to put out *In Search of Black Judas*?

I'd been making riffs and beats for years, and finally, I told the folks at ROIR that I wanted to try making an album. It's like a mix tape, and I wanted to put it out there instead of me riding around listening to it in my car.

How did you produce the latest Bad Brains album?

I knew the styles we wanted to cover—some fast hardcore, a more involved sort of rock, and two or three types of reggae. We'd focus on a track, go home and back to our lives, and then come back and work some more. We got a bunch of material out of that. It's more organic than going in and writing, rehearsing, and trying to record everything in a week. This record took nine or ten months, maybe a year.

There's footage of the recording sessions in last year's *A Band in DC* documentary, but I was surprised they didn't mention *Into the Future*.

I'm not a supporter of that movie. There's some cool stuff in there, but how the hell are they going to begin and end a movie about Bad Brains with a band fight? HR and I have probably argued like that three times in our lives, but they took that vulnerable moment and sensationalized it. I told the director, Look, I know this isn't a promo video and I'm not trying to censor you in any way, but bookending the movie with all that negativity does not represent who we are. They stopped taking my calls.

The film makes one wonder if Bad Brains would have achieved a different kind of success if not for HR.

First of all, I don't think I would still be alive if Bad Brains had experienced the rock-star success people think we should have had. As for HR, he's a deep dude, a complex and very intelligent guy, who gave everything—his mind, his psyche, his spirit—to make the music we made. We are a family of creative brothers, and sometimes, like any family, we're dysfunctional.

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Looking back, I should have gotten someone like [Adam] Yauch, someone who really knows the Bad Brains, to make the movie. If Adam had done this, people wouldn't have left the movie feeling like they'd just seen a tragic Hollywood story. But it's okay; we've been through stuff before, and we'll survive this, too.

Yauch was an early fan. What are your memories of him?

We go way back, to the early '80s, when the Brains came to New York from DC. As the Beastie Boys became more famous, Yauch kept in touch, and we would hang out periodically—he'd send me little nuggets of weed with each of their new records. One day, during one of HR's breaks from the band, Yauch called me to say that he'd seen HR and that we should get together and do a new album. So he instigated that, and we went out to L.A. and made *God of Love*. A few years



Jenifer and Adam "MCA" Yauch

later, he called and said, "D., you ought to let me produce a record." So we went down to Oscilloscope, laid it down, and Yauch was walking around like a substitute teacher, telling us, "Come on, you guys, you gotta do it one more time!" [Laughs.] That's how we made *Build a Nation*. It was a beautiful time. He

was my little homey, my brethren, a talented producer and bass player, and a funny guy. I miss that dude.

What's your next musical adventure?

Bad Brains are hitting the road, and I'm making a record with a band called White Mandingo. It's me, Murs, and Sasha Jenkins. The album is sort of like a hip-hop *Tommy*; it's a story about a black kid, but it's hip-hop and rock, and it's pretty dope.

What advice would you give to a player who wanted to take it to the next level?

Go learn your Graham. Go learn your Jamerson. Jamerson will teach you how to play what's right for the song and how to accompany singers. He was one of the busiest bass players ever, but if you weren't listening for it, you couldn't tell, even under singers! Listen to the Carpenters to hear how they played great music without having to show off. Don't treat music like a hobby, or else it'll sound like it's a hobby. Play it. Be it. Live it. Make sure you have your vision and your passion. And stay inventive. **BP**

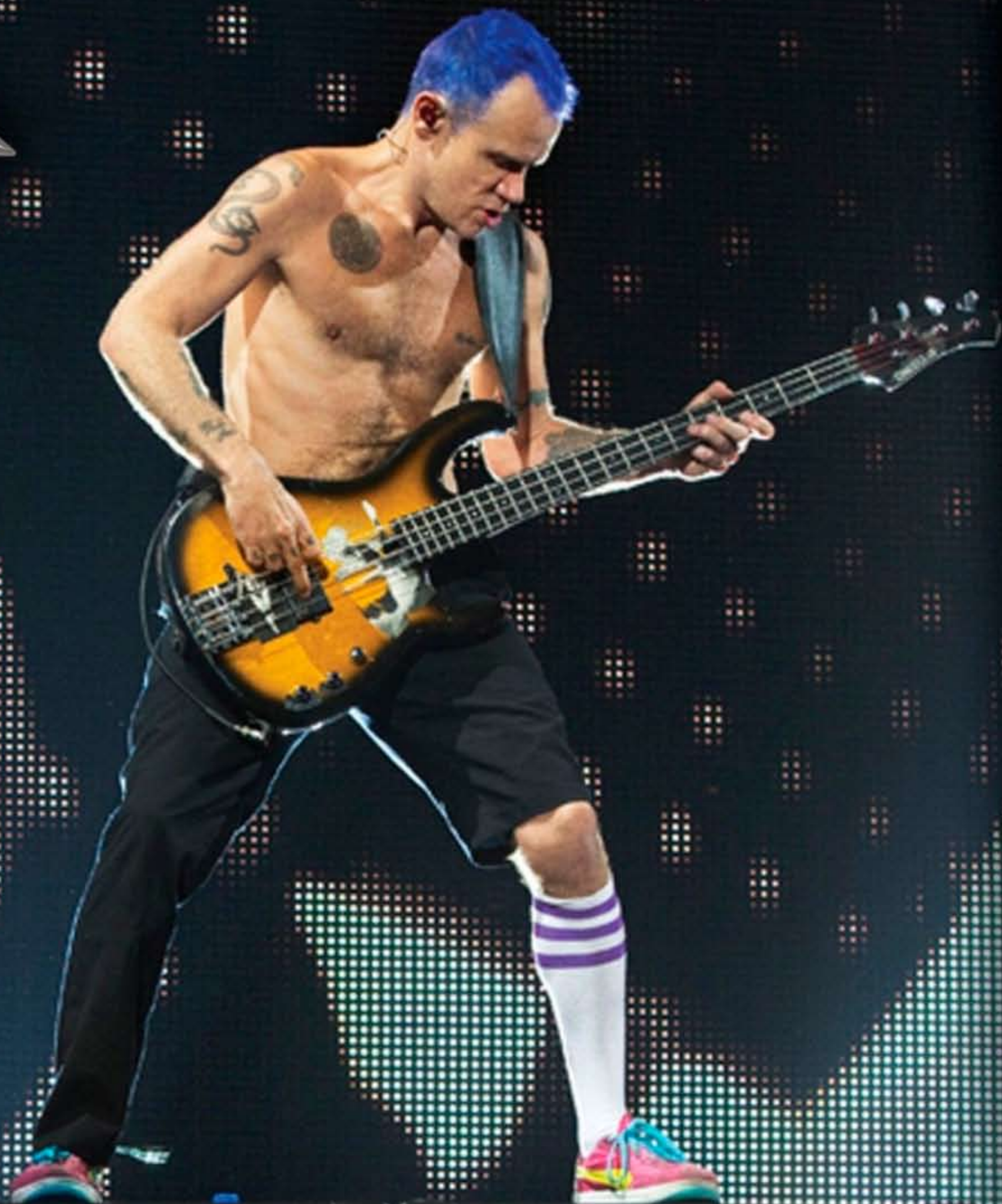
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VICTOR WOOTEN

EXPLORES SHADOW &
LIGHT ON TWO NEW DISCS

BY CHRIS JISI

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVEN PARKE

WHEN VICTOR WOOTEN SET OUT TO EMBRACE THE SINGER/songwriter realm, fans knew he was going to do it on his own terms; no “palmystry” there. What has exceeded expectations, however, is the vision and scope with which Wooten approaches the genre. On *Words and Tones*, one of two simultaneously released CDs on Vix Records, Wooten features no fewer than nine female vocalists delivering originals (and a few covers) that encompass funk, folk, pop, jazz, R&B, rap, and Latin genres, all without losing the depth and message of their lyrics, or the memorable weight of their hooks. Yin to *Words and Tones*’ yang (or vice versa, depending on which you spin first) is *Sword and Stone*—derived by moving the letter S in both words of the former’s title. It’s a high-caliber instrumental



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F VICTOR WOOTEN

take on the vocal tunes, in which Wooten boldly accepts the challenge of delivering the same song clout, sans singing. The 28 tracks en masse raise Wooten's music to its peak, while casting his basses in head-shaking new sonic, support, and solo roles that only Victor can conceive of and deliver. We checked in with Wooten on his East Coast tour, with a band that boasts bassists Steve Bailey, Anthony Wellington, and Dave Welsch, drummers J.D. Blair and Derico Watson, and vocalist Krystal Peterson, all of whom play multiple instruments to recreate the CDs' range and resonance.

What led to your two-CD concept?

My original idea was to do a CD featuring female vocalists, because listening to a great female vocal performance has always been at the top of the musical food chain for me. But as I was recording demo tracks for the vocalists, I would play the melodies on bass, and I realized I liked the songs as instrumentals, too. So, having my own label, I got to fulfill a longtime dream of having two separate albums come out on the same day. I wanted to make each CD different, knowing they were going to have a lot of the same material, so I recorded different solos and changed the arrangements and instrumentation. In addition, four of the 14 songs on each disc are unique to that CD.

Did you view the instrumental CD as more of a bass disc, and how did you handle the challenge of interpreting the songs instrumentally?

I didn't view either disc as a bass showcase. Over the last few years the prime focus of my projects has been the music; these CDs are all about the songs. If there was a certain melody or lyric I wanted to highlight on the instrumental version, I would frame it to stand out by doubling it, or via the groove, or by putting an open break in, as I did on "A Woman's Strength." It's funny; I've been asked which CD to listen to first—assuming I'll be blessed by fans who buy both. It's an individual choice, but *Words and Tones* is how the songs were originally conceived.

Your layering of basses gives both CDs a unique sound.

The layered basses make me feel like the music is my own. But I'm not doing it to be clever or showy. It just so happens I play bass better than anything else, so that's the fastest way to get my ideas from my head and heart to tape. If I had to sit there with my limited keyboard skills and punch one chord at a time, it would pull me away from the creative process. I have all of my different-range basses around me, and I plug them in and throw down the parts.

i INFO



EQUIP

Basses Fodera Yin Yang, fretless Fodera Yin Yang (with Hipshot Bass Xtender), Fodera N.Y.C. 5, Fodera Monarch tenor bass, Fodera Monarch stereo bass, fretless Taylor 4-string acoustic bass guitar, Spellbinder Mando Piccolo bass, Bassimer, Italian upright, Yamaha Silent Cello

Strings Assorted D'Addario and Fodera sets

Rig Hartke LH1000 head, Hartke HyDrive 410 and 115 cabinets, Effects Boss GT-6B, Rodenberg Gas 728B NG, Zoom B3, DigiTech Whammy Pedal

Studio setup Direct to Control 24 board (Focusrite preamps), Palmer direct boxes, ADK mics on Hartke rig

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What I mainly need to be aware of is the tracks can sound a little lower in range than folks are used to hearing on other CDs. So in some cases I'd add a high line on keyboard or my Bassimer to balance it out; having the female vocalists helps there, as well. Other than that, the only issue is to be in time and in tune. I'm fine locking in with my other parts; as for tuning, there can be some moments, but often I like the tension created by the basses not being perfectly in tune with each other. Life is perfect in its imperfections.

"Sword & Stone" seems to be a signature piece; it certainly has signature solos on both versions.

That song was pivotal; it was the very first one I worked on, and it was supposed to be a mellow Joni Mitchell/Jaco type of piece. But I found this amazing double-time Indian clay pot loop on Pro Tools that I couldn't resist, and it put me in a whole new frame of mind for the song and the CD, which was supposed to be like Joni's *Shadows and Light* album.

My solos incorporate my hair-tie technique. I always have a hair tie around the nut, and I pull it up to around the 16th fret while playing around the 8th fret. That makes some of the notes pop out with screaming harmonics—I do it on "Say Word" and "It's All Right," too. Here, I used my tenor bass with a little distortion and flanger, and I just played whatever came into my head, loosely keeping in mind the root of the first chord in the two-chord progression [C7–A7]. I've come to realize that when I play in the range of a guitar or horn—which sits on top of the music—I can get away with anything note-wise. You can't do that on the low end; the frequencies are too wide, and they vibrate too slowly,

to play "out" when soloing in that register. Another key when playing "out" up high is having good time and phrasing, because people don't only listen with their ears, they feel with their bodies.

"Hope," "Merlin," and "Keep It Low" from *Sword and Stone* are the most bass-centric tracks.

I had some instrumental tunes I wanted to use, but I couldn't get them off an old computer, so I literally wrote and recorded "Hope" and "Merlin" the morning before I went to master the CDs. "Hope" is a solo chordal piece on my stereo tenor bass, with me rolling tape, trying ideas, and then reacting and adding to those ideas. "Merlin" is from a loop-pedal feel that I sang into my iPhone. I recorded the bottom part and then added about six more parts on top. For the lead solo, I applied some altered scales I learned from keyboardist Steve Weingart.

"Keep It Low" started as a groove we used to play in my Soul Circus band, and I recorded it to remember it. When summer NAMM started in Nashville, I would grab whoever was in town—Bill Dickens, Oteil Burbridge, Kai Eckhardt—and have them come over and play once through the track. For this project,

REMEMBER
THE GAME?
WE CHANGED IT AGAIN...
(sorry)



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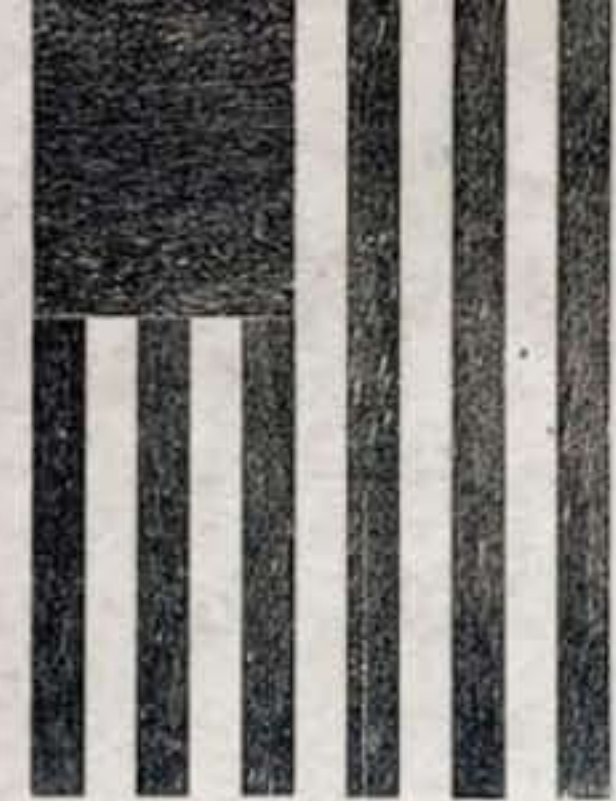
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VICTOR
WOOTEN

I took all 11 guest contributions and flew them at different times, all around the track; then I added a crazy solo using my stereo bass panned across the spectrum, with the effects changing from right to left.

Your use of strings—including your playing cello and viola—is a key sonic component, especially on “A Women’s Strength” and “Love to Hear U Laugh.”

I’ve always loved the sound of real strings; the grit of the bow, the hair across strings. “Laugh” was the first cello song I recorded, and it had been three years since I played, so there was some pain and plenty of Pro Tools takes involved. I doubled the melody on viola for a different sound, but I played it vertically in my lap, like a cello, because I had better control and tone that way. My friend Kelly Ellis also played cello on “Women’s Strength.”

Groove-wise, what stands out is your tumbao-like part on “Love Is My Favorite Word,” your overall work on “Overjoyed,” and “Heaven,” where your bass provides the track’s feel.

All of those are played on my Fodera N.Y.C. 5, with heavier-gauge strings and higher action. The tumbao on “Love” isn’t authentic; I don’t know clavé, so it’s just me playing what I wanted it to feel like. I hope I didn’t offend any cultures! What made “Overjoyed” fun was I recorded live with [drummer] J.D. Blair and my brother Joe on keys, so the interaction factor is there. “Heaven” is a tribute to lost family members. Aside from the solo section, in which [my brothers] Joseph, Regi, Roy, and I each start with the last line from the previous solo, the song is really just the bottom bass and the chordal bass on top. Overall, the bouncy, sort of double-timey bass line just happened; I wanted to keep an upbeat side, given the solemn content.

What’s next for you?

We’ll continue to tour in support of the CDs in early 2013. The band and the music are growing every night. I just bought a euphonium and Anthony Wellington got a sax, so we’re going to do Jaco’s “Three Views of a Secret” with four-part horns. Label-wise, I’m putting together a CD of my live 15-minute solo spots over the years. And I’m working on a sequel to [novel/audiobook] *The Music Lesson*, which will start where the first one left off, and will have some new characters. This one deals with music dying and becoming extinct; what would the world be like, and will we allow it to happen? Right now, though, I’m grateful that my life is filled with music.

See music on page 48



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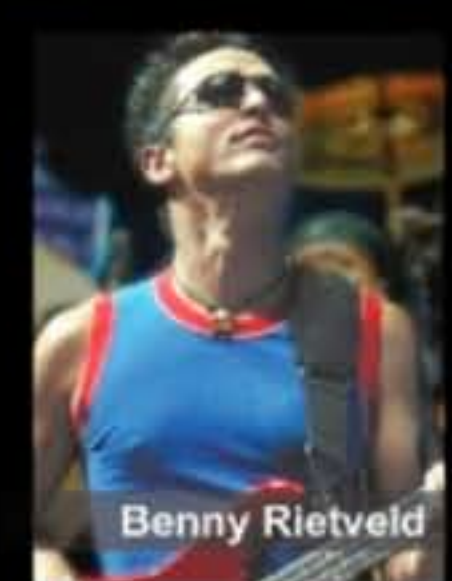
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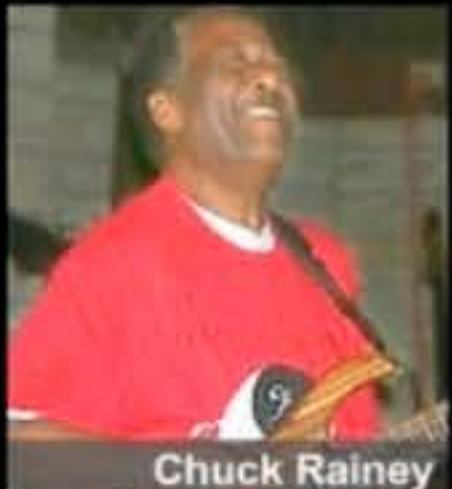
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Tribute M-2000 GTS



Tribute M-2000 GTB

G&L Guitars Tribute M-2000 Basses

BY BRIAN FOX

THE EVER-EXPANDING LIST OF LEGENDARY ELECTRIC bass players grows longer with each passing year, as player after player pushes the boundaries of what can be done on an instrument that's but a baby in the clan of stringed instruments. Throughout its development, the electric bass itself has benefited from innovation from all sides, as materials, construction methods, electronics, and ergonomics have converged

to create a wild array of variations on the themes first conceived and executed by Leo Fender, who could best be described as the Father of the Electric Bass. First with the Fender Precision and Jazz Basses, then with the funk-favored StingRay, and finally with his L-Series G&L basses, Leo wrote the



book for the electric bass as we know it.

Following Fender's death in 1991, G&L has continued to produce Leo's L-Series basses, with their distinctive Magnetic Field Design pickups and Tri-Tone active electronics circuits. Recognizing that the somewhat unusual layout of the L-series controls—which offer switches for series, parallel, active, passive, and treble-boost settings—doesn't appeal to some stripes of bass player, last year G&L unveiled its M-Series basses, which feature a more conventional 3-band EQ control and a pan pot for pickup selection. This year, the company has followed up by offering the M-2000 and 5-string M-2500 basses in its Tribute line of imported instruments.

M- M- GOOD

For testing, G&L sent along two versions of the Tribute M-2000: an M-2000 GTB with a basswood body, and an M-2000 GTS with a mahogany body and a flame maple top. Both basses are made in Indonesia and feature body binding, a matching headstock, G&L Magnetic Field Design pickups, a 1 5/8" width at the nut, a maple neck and rosewood fingerboard, and an 18-volt preamp with volume, pickup blend, and three bands of EQ boost/cut.

Both basses arrived with play-ready setups, though I needed to make a few minor saddle tweaks to suit my particular playing style. Each M-2000 has two control cavities—one for each pair of 9V batteries, and one for preamps themselves. The control cavities were tidy, the 6-bolt neck joints were solid, and the hardware and fretwork and were cleanly installed and executed.

A nifty feature of the MFD pickups is that the height of each pole can be adjusted with an Allen key. The M-2000s' pickup output and balance were pretty dialed in when the basses arrived, but it was fun to experiment by raising the poles on either pickup for extra oomph. Alone or blended, both the neck

S SPECIFICATIONS

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and bridge position pickups sound huge. Though I might opt for a different bass if I were looking for the milder, more nuanced sound of single-coil pickups, I loved the stout, assertive punch of the MFDs on both basses.

Though subtle, the different body woods do seem to have an impact on the tone; with its powerful preamp and muscular pickups, the GTB has a commendable range of sounds, but something in the marriage of mahogany and maple on the GTS makes for a ballsier midrange punch and high-end deliciousness. That, combined with fetching flame top and transparent black finish, made me more likely to grab the GTS. With a difference of just \$20, the upgrade from the GTB to the GTS is definitely a move I would make.

Though I've long been a fan of G&L's somewhat quirky L-Series electronics, I dig what they've done with the M-Series. With three bands of EQ and the ability to blend the pickups, the basses have a lot to offer. By bringing the M-2000's features to the Tribute line, G&L has taken a very worthy bass to a very competitive price point, all without sacrificing much in terms of quality or features. Highly recommended. **BP**



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Teye Guitars **Electric Gypsy "La Perla"**

BY DAVE POMEROY | PHOTOS BY MICKEY DOBO

THE TEYE ELECTRIC GYPSY "LA PERLA" BASS

is a unique piece of playable art that is supremely functional as well. Teye, who is originally from the Netherlands, has been building instruments in Austin, Texas since 2005. Having carved out a niche in the boutique guitar market, he has branched out into making basses, and is taking the same painstaking approach that have made his guitars so desirable. This bass is a stunner, with the musical muscle to back up its beautiful looks.

The breathtaking inlay work on the top of the aptly named bass is the first thing to grab your eye. The single cutaway's shape is outlined in abalone, and the interior inlay is composed of dozens of mother of pearl slivers that shimmer and shine. The "skinny Les Paul" body and the ornate metal carving on the headstock, bridge and elsewhere, are both somewhat reminiscent of the Zemaitis guitars often played by Ronnie Wood and Keith Richards. Despite all the hardware, this bass is not overly heavy and balances very well.

While the top is the primary visual attraction, the rest of the bass is beautiful as well. The sides and back are beautifully grained Korina wood with a gorgeous reddish brown finish, and a sword-shaped metal belt protector adorns the back of the bass. The bridge, saddle, and pickup surrounds are miniature metal sculptures

that are easily and accurately adjustable. Even the truss rod cover is intricately laser engraved to match the headstock.

The medium 32" scale is an interesting choice, (Teye also offers a 34" option) and marries the best of both worlds with its effortless playability, punchy tone, and solid feel. The walnut neck's flat and slightly wide profile makes for easy double stops and chordal playing, and the gently curved heel where it joins the body is one of many small touches that add up to a very classy instrument.

The Electric Gypsy packs a solid punch with two MM-style pickups mounted side by side. The passive electronics feature two volumes, a single tone control, and a mysterious "mood" knob. Closer inspection reveals it to be a subtle tone shaper that works through manipulating the relationship between the pickups double coils in a variety of ways. When you sweep the mood knob while blending the two volumes, a surprisingly wide range of tones come out. It's very easy to dial up a variety of full-range hi-fi sounds, but La Perla can go many other places with a little experimentation. Finger funk sounds snappy, reggae gets thick, and a little dirt really brings out the nastiness in the midrange.

This is the top of the line Teye, and at this price, the La Perla may not be for everyone, but if it's any consolation, its beauty is much more than skin deep, and the quality factor is high in Teye's less expensive basses as well. Though it's hard not to be distracted by its dazzling appearance, this bass is even more fun to play than it is to look at. This is a fine instrument made with extraordinary craftsmanship. **BP**



Source Audio

Soundblox 2 Multiwave Bass Distortion & Dimension Reverb

BY ED FRIEDLAND

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, SOURCE AUDIO HAS introduced several effect pedals with innovative design concepts and forward-thinking technology, firmly establishing the company as a home for visionary sonic architects. The Soundblox 2 series compacts the previous two versions of the Multiwave Bass Distortion into a smaller footprint, and has the capacity to save two presets. The Dimension Reverb is the first pedal of its kind from Source Audio, and predictably adds some new capabilities that set it apart from the pack.

Distortion is an effect many bassists love, but often

find difficult to use in context. It's not hard to add distortion to bass, but preserving your attack and low end is always a challenge. The multiwave concept breaks the bass signal into separate frequency bands that get distorted individually, then summed back together to create a saturation that avoids much of the harmonic dreck that can obscure the fundamental. The Multiwave Bass Distortion's separate CLEAN and DISTORTION MIX controls allow you to dial in the perfect effect balance, while a 3-band EQ offers programmable tone shaping for your presets, and simple on-the-fly adjustments that can optimize the tone of the effect. A 3-level noise gate allows you to select the ideal amount of gating, and the DRIVE knob supplies the fuel for your distorted tone. The heart of the pedal is the same



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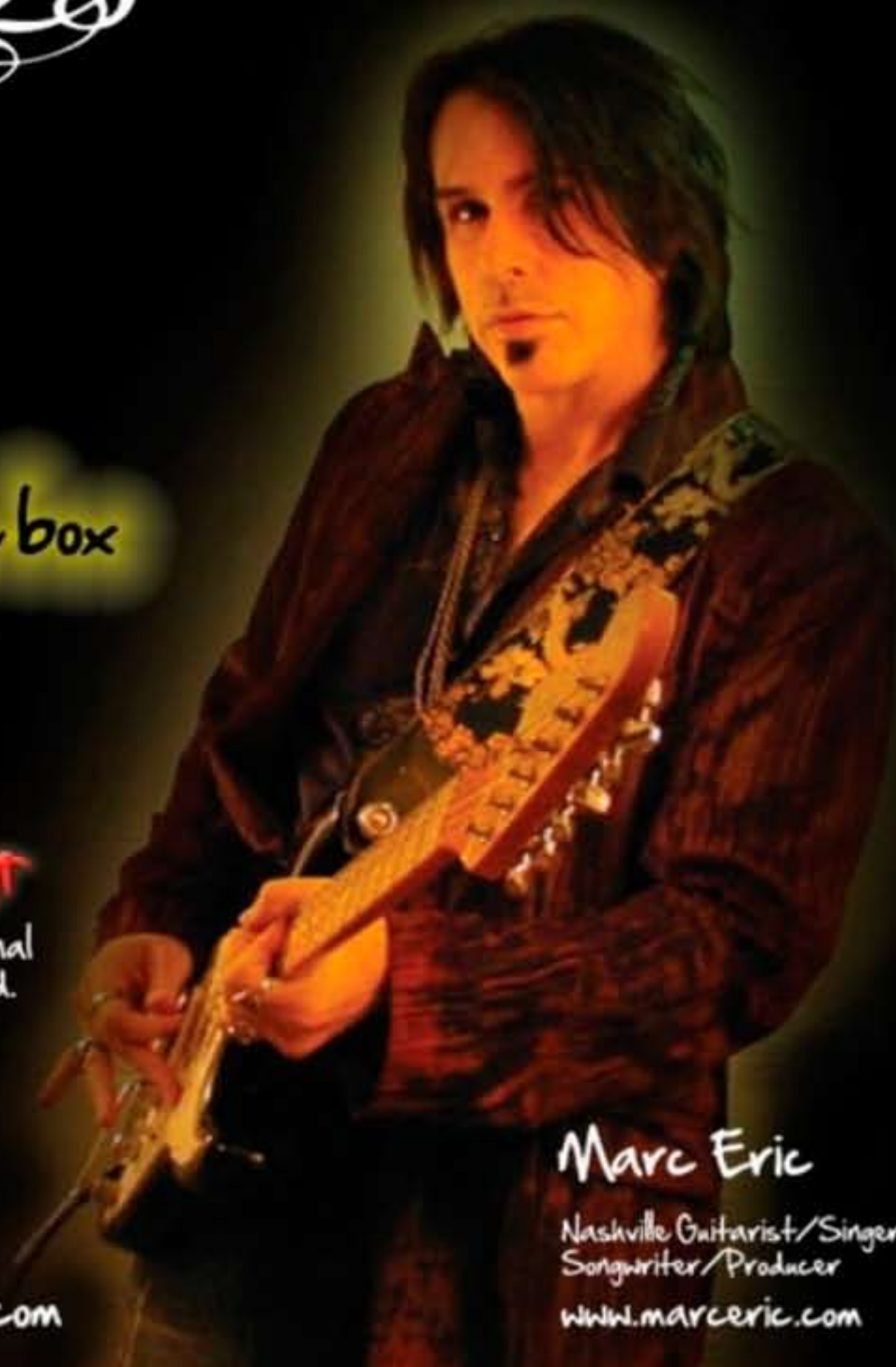
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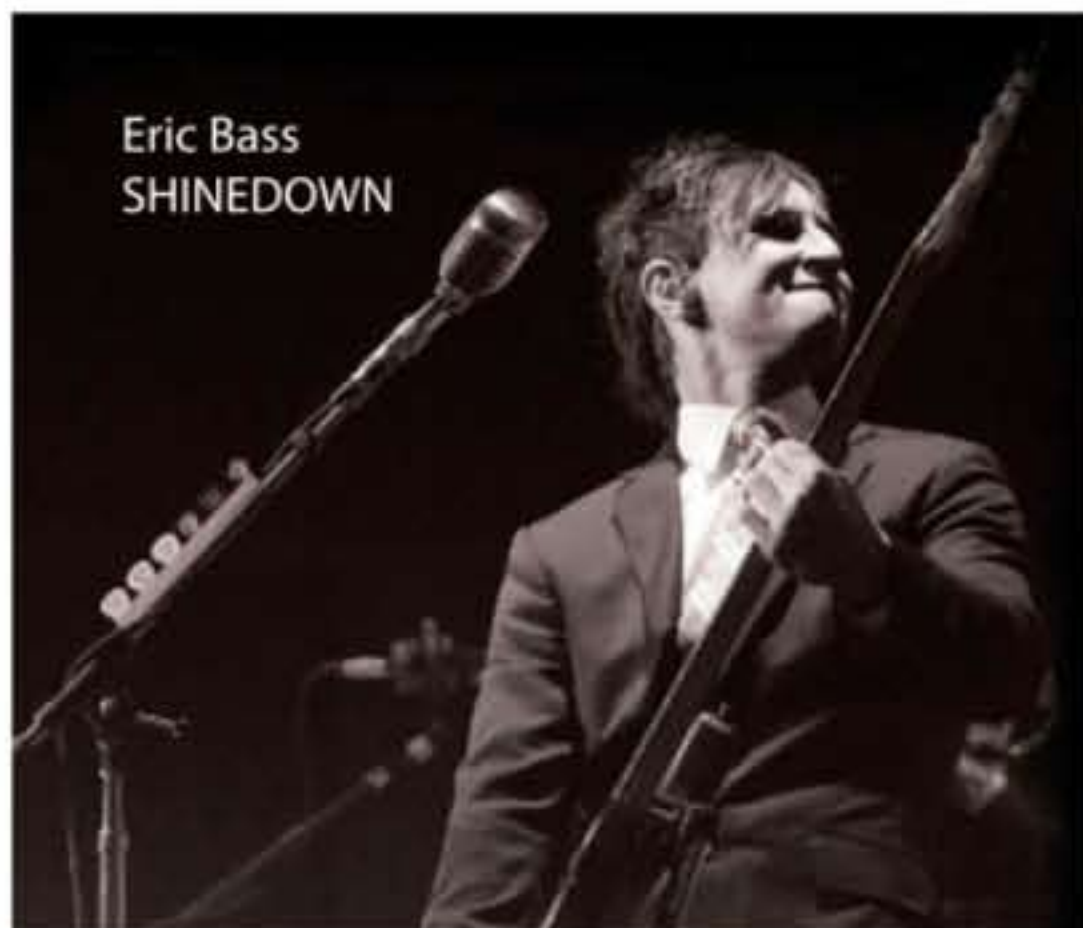
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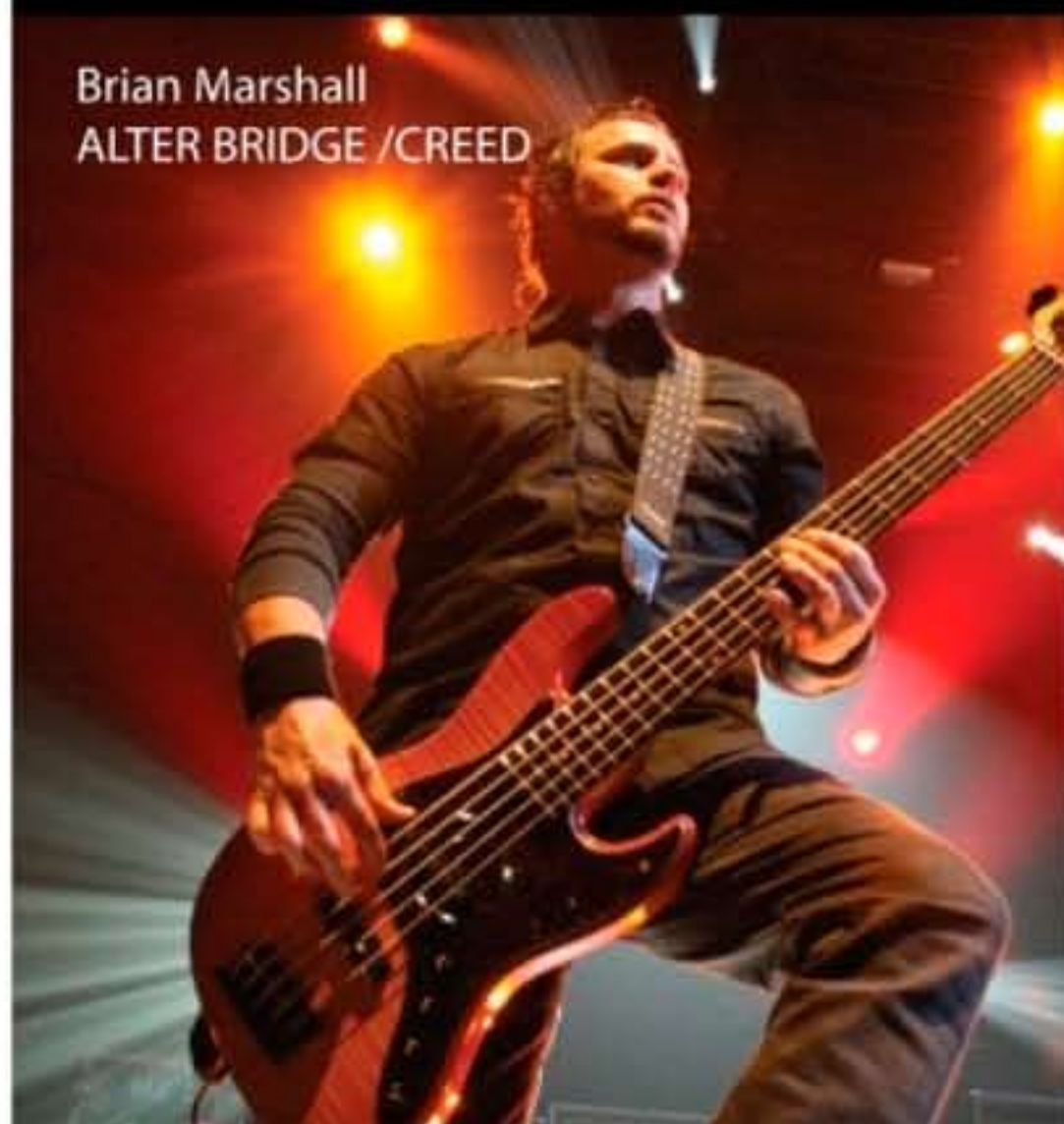


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SOUNDROOM

23 distortion presets found on the original Multiwave Bass Distortion and Pro versions. They are split into two basic categories—Multi-band and Single-band, and within each category, the effects are divided up three ways: Normal, Foldback and Octave. The Normal group produces the most typical sounding effects, and in Multi-band mode, gives you maximum note clarity for chords. Foldback mode delivers more extreme distortion, and with right hand dynamics, can bring out an envelope filter-like response to the effect. The Octave settings shape the distortion curve to accentuate the second order harmonics, bringing out a distinct resonance one octave higher. There is also a clean boost setting that adds gain without the added calories of distortion.

The Dimension Reverb is a well-equipped digital reverb pedal with six different room settings, two separate spring, plate, and modulated choices, and an echo function. The TIME control changes the length of the reverb, while the MIX knob gives control over the effect-to-dry blend. The OPTION dial connects with the OPTION SELECT button to reign over PRE DELAY, OUTPUT, DIFFUSION, RATE, BASS, and DEPTH. The TREBLE knob controls the high frequency damping of the effect sound.

Both the Multiwave Bass Distortion and Dimension Reverb share Source Audio's proprietary 56-bit SA601 DSP, and 24-bit converters. The digital horsepower is evidenced by their ultra-quiet operation, and sparkling audio quality. Both also employ selectable true-bypass or buffered modes of operation. The Soundblox 2 series also shares multiple options for external MIDI, expression, or their own unique Hot Hand Motion Sensor



S SPECIFICATIONS

SOUNDBLOX 2
MULTIWAVE BASS DISTORTION
Street \$169
DIMENSION REVERB
Street \$189

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SOURCE AUDIO

SPECIFICATIONS

Inputs ¼" Guitar In, Multi-Function In (external control)
Outputs ¼" Guitar Out, Multi-Function Out
Input impedance 1MΩ
Output impedance 1KΩ, buffered or relay-based True Bypass
Audio 24-bit
Processing SA601 56-bit DSP
Switches Preset 1 & 2 on/off
Controls Multiwave Bass Distortion: EFFECT TYPE, CLEAN MIX, DRIVE, DISTORTION MIX, TONE, NOISE GATE SELECT, TONE SHAPE; Dimension Reverb: EFFECT TYPE, TIME, OPTION, MIX, TREBLE, OPTION SELECT, CONTROL INPUT
Power 140mA@ 9v DC, negative tip power jack
Dimensions 4.5" x 4.5" x 2.25"
Weight 1 lb
Warranty Two year non-transferable

controllers. Each pedal has its own set of assignable parameters that can produce real-time effects from the various external controllers.

Getting down to business, I plugged the two pedals (distortion first, then reverb) into my pedal board, as they do not run on batteries (9V DC power supply included). The Multiwave Bass Distortion was somewhat of a mind-blower; I never imagined it possible to play anything more than a root-5 power chord with distortion, but the unit's multi-band overdrive processing gives the harmonic content enough separation and clarity to work with 3rds and 7ths in chords, using three, sometimes even four notes simultaneously without the horrible gnash of competing overtones. Working with the DRIVE knob, I found that the sensitivity of the effect changed as well as the saturation level. At higher settings, each preset exhibits unique variations that respond to right hand dynamics, giving the pedal a very musical expression. For



PHOTO BY SANDRINE LEE

Lakland Artist
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my first preset, I used effect number 10 for a synth-like octave with smooth saturation. The octave effect was well pronounced, and tracked flawlessly through the full range of my Lull MV5. But even cooler was the envelope filter response I could trigger dynamically with percussive dead notes—Edgar Winter's "Frankenstein" came to mind immediately. For my second preset, I went for a more traditional overdrive tone using preset 16 (Single Band, Normal). The three-band EQ was most helpful for bringing out the edge, attack, and punch of the tone, and varying degrees of DRIVE let me choose between a more subdued tube amp-ish drive, or a heavier fuzz—it also exhibits great dynamic response.

While reverb is not as ubiquitous in the bass realm, adding the right ambience behind a solo, or dialing up a short decay room sound for some funk slap can be a beautiful thing. And for solo bassists, the Dimension Reverb opens up some unique atmospheric backgrounds for improv with an almost infinite amount decay time. The echo effect can be used to create loops, or simple slap-back effects, and everything comes through with audio quality not found in most pedals.

Both pedals impressed me with their performance and sound quality, though the Soundblox 2 Multiwave Distortion really stands out as a great sounding, flexible drive pedal that really delivers the goods, and will find it's way to many bassists pedalboards. **BP**

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JAZZ CONCEPTS

Jimmie Blanton & "Jack The Bear"

BY JOHN GOLDSBY



RECENTLY I HAD THE PLEASURE OF HANGING OUT WITH VICTOR

Bailey when he was in town playing a Jaco tribute project. Victor offered up some nice comments about BASS PLAYER and said he remembered a column I did years ago on Jimmie Blanton. "That's amazing," I thought. "Here's one of the hippest electric players on the scene today, and he's talking about Jimmie Blanton, an acoustic bassist who passed away 70 years ago."

Blanton was a giant among bassists, and he influenced a wide range of players who followed, from Ray Brown and Charles Mingus to Jaco Pastorius. Blanton rocketed to fame in 1939 when he joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra. In Ellington's biography, *Music Is My Mistress* [Da Capo Press, 1973], the bandleader recalled first hearing Blanton at an after-hours jam session in St. Louis, and subsequently hiring him the next day: "All we wanted was that sound, that beat, and those precision notes in the right places, so that we could float out on the great and adventurous sea of expectancy with his pulse and foundation behind us."

EX. 1

Swing
♩ = 156

A $\flat$ 6

EX. 2

Swing
♩ = 156

A $\flat$ 6

i INFO

Read more about Jimmie (or Jimmy) Blanton in John Goldsby's *The Jazz Bass Book* [Backbeat Books], and check out Blanton's arco solo style in *Jazz Bowing Techniques for the Improvising Bassist* [Aebersold Jazz]. You can also visit John at his new website, johngoldsbys.com, or join the discussion with John at the LowDown Forum at forums.musicplayer.com.

- No film of Blanton exists, and few photos are available. See one of the best close-ups of the young man, bow tie and all.
- Jimmie Blanton and Duke Ellington play "Body and Soul," with Blanton bowing the melody.



JOHN GOLDSBY

CONNECT

Shooting stars often fade from the sky too quickly, and Blanton was no exception. He contracted tuberculosis and died on July 30, 1942 at the age of 23, after only two years with Ellington. Fortunately for us, 1939–41 were particularly productive years for the Ellington band, and we have many recorded examples of Blanton's work.

In the late '30s and early '40s, there were a handful of bass stars on the scene: Leroy "Slam" Stewart, Bob Haggart, John Kirby, Milt Hinton, and Walter Page. They all had individual, identifiable sounds, but none had the technical prowess and artistic audacity that Blanton displayed. Writer Dave Koonce paid posthumous tribute to Blanton in his 1942 *Metronome* magazine article "Late Jimmy Blanton, Bassdom's Greatest." Koonce wrote, "The youngster was the first bass man to stray away from the basic 1-3-5 chords, to begin experimenting with flatted 9ths, flatted 5ths, and 13ths."

Blanton fired up the Ellington band, and changed the role of the bass forever. In contrast to the static, often inaudible thumping of many bassists of the era, he played precise, contrapuntal lines that stood alone as beautiful bass melodies. He was regularly featured as a soloist with Ellington, and in pictures we see that he stood in the front line of the band, in front of the

drums, in a line parallel to the piano and saxophone section. He set the bar for the swing style of jazz bass playing that still stands. Koonce noted, "Bass men soon found that much more was expected of them. They began studying and, consequently, producing."

Most fans cite "Jack the Bear," which was the theme song for Ellington at the time, as the ultimate Blanton showcase. Koonce marveled at Blanton's speed on this track, writing that the bassist was "sometimes averaging six strokes per second." I can imagine Koonce in 1942, sitting with his 78 RPM record player and his watch, trying to figure out how many notes per second Blanton was playing in the triplet section of his "Jack the Bear" solo. We can all agree that Blanton was fleet—especially considering his gut strings, high action, lack of amplification, and one-finger right-hand technique.

I've spent years checking out Blanton's walking style, beat, and solo lines. Let's look at three of my favorite trademark Blanton licks played in various versions of "Jack the Bear."

Example 1 shows a walking pattern that we all know. Blanton owned this lick, which he often played during the walking sections of his "Jack the Bear" bass feature. Practice tip: Play the two-bar walking pattern in all 12 keys.

EX. 3

Swing
♩ = 156

A $\flat$ G G $\flat$ F E E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$ 6

3 Essential Blanton Recordings



Duke at Fargo, 1940 [Vintage Jazz Classics]
On the road in late fall 1940, the Duke Ellington Orchestra made a stop

in Fargo, North Dakota, to play a dance at the Crystal Ballroom. Ellington fans Jack Towers and Richard Burris asked Duke for his permission to record the band with one microphone and their Presto turntable. Over the course of the night, they cut six 15-minute acetate disks, and documented one of the best live big band performances in music history. After many years of bootleg notoriety, the album was officially released in 1979 and won a Grammy Award that year in the category Best

Jazz Instrumental Performance, Big Band. This recording captures the extraordinary vibe of the Ellington band in their road-pounding glory years.



The Blanton-Webster Band [RCA]

This three-CD set includes 66 studio tracks from the Jimmie Blanton era of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Saxophonist Ben Webster is also heavily featured. If you're looking for a comprehensive collection of classic Ellington material, this is the place to start. Swing standards like "Perdido," "In a Mellotone," and "C Jam Blues" are represented,

along with bass features like "Sepia Panorama" and "Jack the Bear."



Ellington Solos Duets & Trios [RCA/Bluebird]

In 1941, Ellington had the good sense to lay down duet tracks with his wunderkind bassist. This collection features four songs plus alternate takes: "Pitter, Panther, Patter," "Body and Soul," "Sophisticated Lady," and "Mr. J.B. Blues." Blanton delivers brilliant, creative solos and supporting lines, prodded by Ellington's elegant and swinging piano. These duets are cult classics in the bass community!



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Example 2 is another walking line from "Jack the Bear." Here Blanton adds a chromatic passing tone between the 6th and 5th degrees of a major scale: He uses the note $F\flat$ (you can also call it an E) between the F and $E\flat$ in the descending $A\flat$ major scale. Bebop bass players such as Oscar Pettiford and Ray Brown later picked up this technique and used it in their lines. Practice tip: Play all 12 major scales up and down with a chromatic note between the 5th and 6th scale degrees.

Example 3 shows Blanton's flashy finish to his solo on "Jack the Bear." Note that after he descends in intervals of broken 5ths, he runs

up an $A\flat$ major scale, hitting the chromatic note $F\flat$ between the 5th ($E\flat$) and 6th (F) scale degrees. Practice tip: Play broken-5th intervals up and down chromatically.

Whether you're playing slamming fusion or swinging straightahead jazz, you owe a large debt to the groundbreaking strides that Blanton made over 70 years ago. Koonce summed it up in his Blanton profile: "In spite of the surge of popularity offered by the present-day sensationists on the instrument, Jimmy Blanton will not be forgotten—he was *building something* that is still being built." **BP**



Jimmie Or Jimmy?

When I wrote *The Jazz Bass Book* in 2002, I referred to Mr. James H. Blanton Jr. by the first name I had most often seen in liner notes and jazz history books: *Jimmy*. (Note the spelling in the quotes in this column by Dave Koonz.) A few years ago, Bob Sinicrope, bassist and president of the Jazz Education Network, told me that his research at the Ellington Society in New York indicated that Blanton preferred his first name to be spelled *Jimmie*.

I made a series of detective-style e-mail inquiries, and heard from jazz journalist and Ellington expert Brian Priestley, who said that even though most books and liner notes refer to "Jimmy," Blanton did indeed prefer "Jimmie." Says Priestley, "Researcher Steve Lasker of Venice, California, recently found copies of two signatures by Mr. Blanton, where he signed himself as Jimmie."

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BLUES YOU CAN USE

Tuba Or Not Tuba?

BY ED FRIEDLAND



WHILE BLUES BASS PLAYING HAS A DEFINITE

slant toward economical function (in other words, not playing too many notes), there are plenty of examples of bass lines that branch out into more melodic territory. Some can get downright busy on the rhythmic side. This month for inspiration, we're taking a look at the shinier side of bass: the mighty tuba and sousaphone. In the days before amplification, the tuba was the most popular bass instrument for many types of bands, as it's louder than upright bass. And while tubists are very familiar with holding down the bottom with simple alternating root-5th parts, the instrument has a strong tradition as a melodic voice, and has given birth to some very cool lines that can be transferred to bass. While not blues per se, the Latin American genre known as *banda* features some of the most off-the-hook tuba playing you'll ever hear; check out "Florita De Alma" by El Coyote y Su Banda Tierra Santa, and imagine trying to pull off some of those licks!

When it comes to tuba and the blues, look no further than the Crescent City to find some of the baddest horn blowers on earth. **Example 1** is a simple tuba bass line similar to what Anthony "Tuba Fats" Lacen played on Corey Harris' "Fish Ain't Biting." It's a very fundamental line, emphasizing the root and 5th; alternating between double chromatic or scale approaches to the root, though, gives it a cool, melodic character.

New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band has been

credited with reviving worldwide interest in the tradition of brass bands, and a big part of its popularity stems from the outrageous sousaphone stylings of Kirk Joseph. A self-proclaimed disciple of "Tuba Fats" Lacen, Joseph's playing ranges from traditional "oom-pah" parts, to smooth walking lines, to muscular funk that rivals some of the best electric bassists out there. Check out his funky approach on Professor Longhair's second-line classic "Big Chief" (a 12-bar blues in *E♭*), from the DDBB's *Medicated Magic* [2002].

Example 2 (next page) is a close approximation of Joseph's line starting at 2:21; keep in mind, this baby clips along at 128 BPM. His effortless register changes will be tricky to pull off on bass, but not impossible. His healthy use of dead notes is very Fender-like, and the propulsion and punch he creates is reminiscent of Bootsy Collins' stint with James Brown.

Joseph has the ability to make his horn sound like an electric bass, but how about reversing the equation? To get a tuba-like sound, use the palm-mute technique to fatten up your tone and shorten the decay. Then, play your notes on the lower strings in higher positions, and you'll get the natural plumpness of a short, fat string. I refer to this tone as "inflat-a-bass," because every note sounds like it's filled with air. Enjoy learning this bass line—did you ever imagine you'd get your butt kicked by a sousaphone player? Until next time, keep it low and in the groove. **BP**

INFO

Bass player and educator extraordinaire Ed Friedland gets his root-5 on in a number of bands from his home base in Austin, Texas.

edfriedland.com

Play along with El Coyote, Tuba Fats, and Kirk Joseph and put some brass in your bass!



ED FRIEDLAND

CONNECT

EX. 1

Example 1: Tuba Bass Line (Bass Staff)

Chords: G7, C7, G7, D7, C7, G7

Notes (Fingering):

- Measure 1: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 2: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 3: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 4: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 5: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 6: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 7: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 8: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 9: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 10: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 11: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)
- Measure 12: G2 (10), B2 (10 10), D3 (12 11), G2 (10)



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EX. 2

EX. 2

4/4

E $\flat$ 7

8 (8) 5 (5) 6 6 8 8 6 (6) 6 (6) 3 (3) 3 (3) 4 6 6 (6) 3 3 5 8 8 8 6 (5) 5 8 8 6 5

5

A $\flat$ 7

E $\flat$ 7

3 3 4 4 3 6 4 6 3 3 4 4 5 6 4 6 3 4 5 6 4 6 5 5 5 6 6 7 7

9

B $\flat$ 7

A $\flat$ 7

E $\flat$ 7

8 8 8 8 8 6 6 5 4 2 4 (3) 3 4 6 5 5 5 8 8 10 11 12 10 9 8

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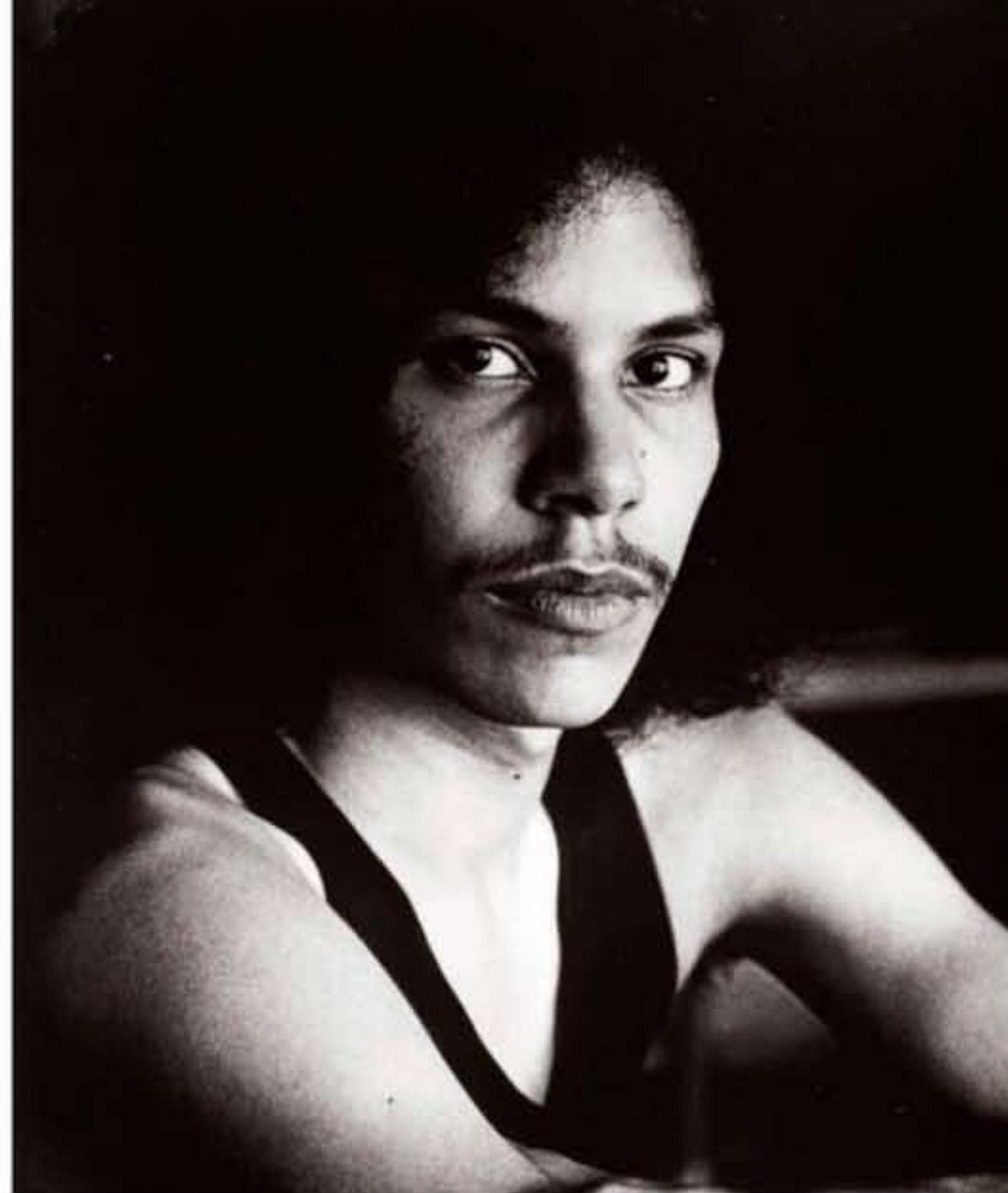


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TRANSCRIPTION



“Sparkle City” By Shuggie Otis

Shuggie Otis' Complete Bass Line

BY BRIAN FOX

IN APRIL 1974, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S ONTARIO MOTOR SPEEDWAY transformed itself from the IndyCar capitol of the West to a rock & roll wonderland, hosting such heavyweights as Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and Earth, Wind & Fire for California Jam, one of the biggest and brashest festivals of the decade. Across town in his cozy Los Angeles home studio, an enigmatic R&B powerhouse by the name of Shuggie Otis was putting the finishing touches on *Inspiration Information*, a deeply personal—and profoundly soulful—record that would become his finest work.

The son of Johnny Otis, whose groundbreaking work as a singer, composer, and record producer earned him the title of “Godfather of Rhythm and Blues,” Shuggie Otis had made a name for himself by 1974 both as a sideman and a solo artist, releasing two albums on Epic Records. “Strawberry Letter 23,” a cut off Shuggie’s 1971 *Freedom Flight* album, would become a massive hit for the Brothers Johnson in 1977, with Louis Johnson thumping something fierce in a juiced-up version of the tune.

When it came to tracking bass on his first two albums, Shuggie had some help in the form of Wilton Felder, a groove legend whose prowess as a sax man was matched by his inventive, melodic bass work. For *Inspiration Information*, Shuggie dug deep, writing and playing most of the instruments himself. Lifting licks from the great James Jamerson, Otis proved himself a superb bassist in his own right on “Sparkle City,” an ode to his hometown of Los Angeles.

After years away from the spotlight, Shuggie Otis has returned with a string of tour dates to support a long-overdue reissue of *Inspiration Information* that features a number of previously unreleased tracks. We spoke to Shuggie upon his return from a run of European gigs.

This year, *Inspiration Information* is being re-released, and you’re playing shows for the first time in a long while. Who’s on bass?

James Manning, who has played with people like Chaka Khan and Billy Preston. He’s an excellent player, and an excellent person to work with; methodical, but at the same

i INFO

Shuggie Otis, *Inspiration Information* [Epic, 1974]

LISTEN



EXPERIENCE

Catch Shuggie on tour this April in Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., Seattle, and San Francisco, and keep an eye out for more upcoming dates. shuggieotisofficial.net

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Check out Shuggie’s original track, along with a recent live performance with James Manning on bass. bassplayer.com/february2013



time, at ease. He's got a great ear—I gave him a CD, and he came in playing all the licks on the first rehearsal.

“Sparkle City,” like many of the tracks on *Inspiration Information*, has a distinct bass tone. How did you get that sound?

That's me playing a Mosrite Joe Maphis bass. My father was endorsed by Mosrite around 1964 or '65; they gave him three 6-string guitars, one 12-string, and a bass. I really loved that bass. It had a narrow neck, but not quite as narrow as a Jazz Bass. When I got it, it had been played by some of the other guys in my dad's band. I switched out the flatwound strings for black nylon strings, and I kept a little piece of foam under the strings near the bridge as a muffle. Especially with that string mute, it gave me just the sound I was looking for. That's what I used mostly on *Inspiration Information*.

If you listen carefully, you can hear two distinct bass tracks on “Sparkle City.” What's going on?

Before I even recorded the bass, I had experimented enough with the track that I knew I needed two bass parts. One was like a pedal, and the other is playing the accents. One drops out when I go to the F chord [Letter F] to play that free-form lead bass part.

Were your bass parts composed or improvised?

The only thing composed was the basic chord changes—everything else was improvised on the spot. I really like the style of [Motown's] James Jamerson; I was experimenting with that kind of groove for years and years.

You're best known as a singer, songwriter, and guitarist, but I understand your earliest gigs with your father, Johnny Otis, were on bass.

Yes, my very first gig was on bass. After that, I played bass on gigs behind various other people. When [trombonist] Gene “The Mighty Flea” Conners or [saxophonist] Preston Love would get gigs around town, I'd play bass with them—guitar, also. Back then, I mostly played a Gibson EB-3. I used that bass for quite a few sessions, as well.

The Mighty Flea was staying with us at the house for a time, and he brought that EB-3 and he gave it to me. When I stopped playing the Gibson and started to play the Mosrite, my half-brother came to me wanting to trade his Fender Jazz Bass for it. So I traded the EB-3 for the Jazz Bass. The Jazz neck felt too thin for me, so I replaced it with a Fender Precision neck. On *Inspiration Information*, I used it on “Island Letter.” I still have that bass—I painted it red and put on a neck with a maple fingerboard. I also have a Fender Aerodyne Jazz Bass.

How did you tend to record bass?

On those records—my own, my father's, and other people's, I usually had an amp in the studio, but there was always a direct box to go through the board. It was mostly the direct signal. One exception was “Purple” [from *Freedom Flight*, Epic, 1971], when I played through a solid-state Ampeg [BT-25] 2x15 amp that Ampeg had given to my father. We cut that track live with just me and the drummer.

You played with Frank Zappa for a time, most famously on “Peaches en Regalia” [*Hot Rats*, Reprise, 1969]. What do you remember about that session?

That's me on the Gibson EB-3. We had fun trying to get the right sound; Frank had a half-stack Marshall amp set up for me, and he was messing with the knobs while I played. On the record, the bass is really deep—it doesn't have a whole lot of definition. That was the sound of that bass. I really liked that low sound, but for a more well-rounded sound, I liked the Fender Jazz.

Did you tend to play with your fingers, or with a pick?

I played some songs with a pick—like “Inspiration Information”—and other songs with my fingers.

On your first two albums, *Here Comes Shuggie Otis* [Epic, 1970] and *Freedom Flight*, Wilton Felder is credited as the bass player.

Yes, Wilton was featured on my first two albums. I believe he played all the bass parts on the first album. I played on a few tunes on the second album, like “Ice Cold Daydream”—with the Mosrite, nylon strings, and a pick—“Strawberry Letter 23,” and “Purple.” Wilton played a Fender Telecaster Bass on “Sweet Thang,” “Someone's Always Singing,” and “Freedom Flight.” The bass on *Inspiration Information* is all me. **BP**

“Sparkle City” by Shuggie Otis

Transcription by Brian Fox



12

18 **B** C Dm F7 B $\flat$ C Dm F7 B $\flat$ C Dm

23 F7 B $\flat$ Am A $\flat$ **C** G7

28

34 **D** C Dm F7 B $\flat$ C Dm F7 B $\flat$

39 C Dm F7 B $\flat$ Am A $\flat$ **E** C7

45 G $\flat$ 6

The transcription shows a bass line with notes and fingerings (numbers 1-5) on a five-line staff. Chord symbols (C, Dm, F7, B $\flat$, Am, A $\flat$, G7, C7, G $\flat$ 6) are placed above the staff. Boxed letters (B, C, D, E) indicate key changes. Technical markings include slurs (S), accents (H), and breath marks (B). The key signature changes from one flat (B $\flat$) to two flats (B $\flat$, E $\flat$) at measure 23, and back to one flat (B $\flat$) at measure 34.

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50 **F** **E♭/B♭** **F** **E♭/B♭**

54 **D** **F** **D** **F**

58 **G** **C** **Dm** **F7** **B♭** **C** **D** **F7** **B♭** **C** **D**

63 **F7** **B♭** **Am** **A♭** **C7**

70 **G♭6** **F** **E♭/B♭**

75 **F** **E♭/B♭** **D** **F**

79 **D** **F** **E7sus2**

Tablature notation (T, B lines) and fret numbers (0-10) are provided for each measure.

83

87

91

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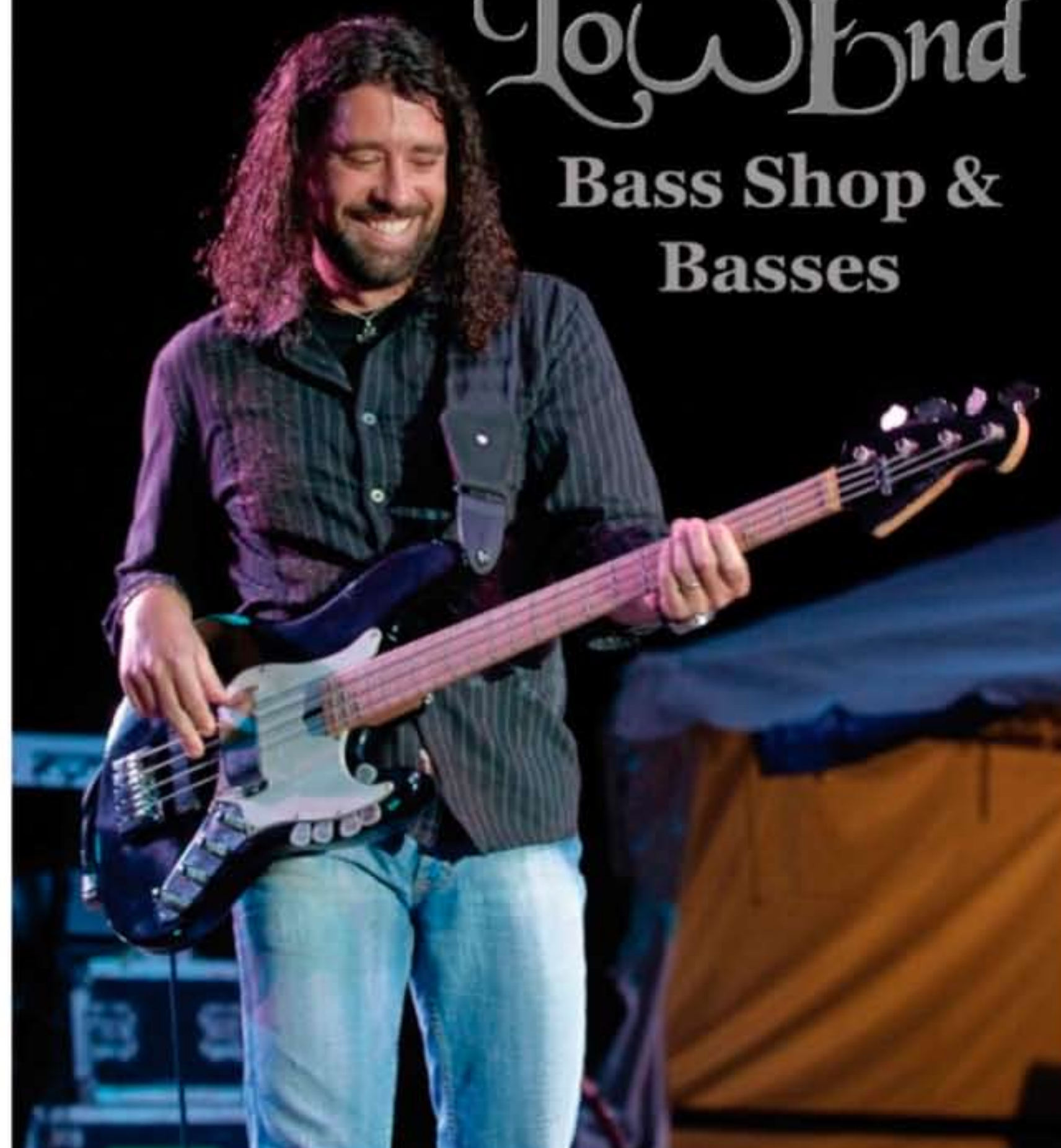
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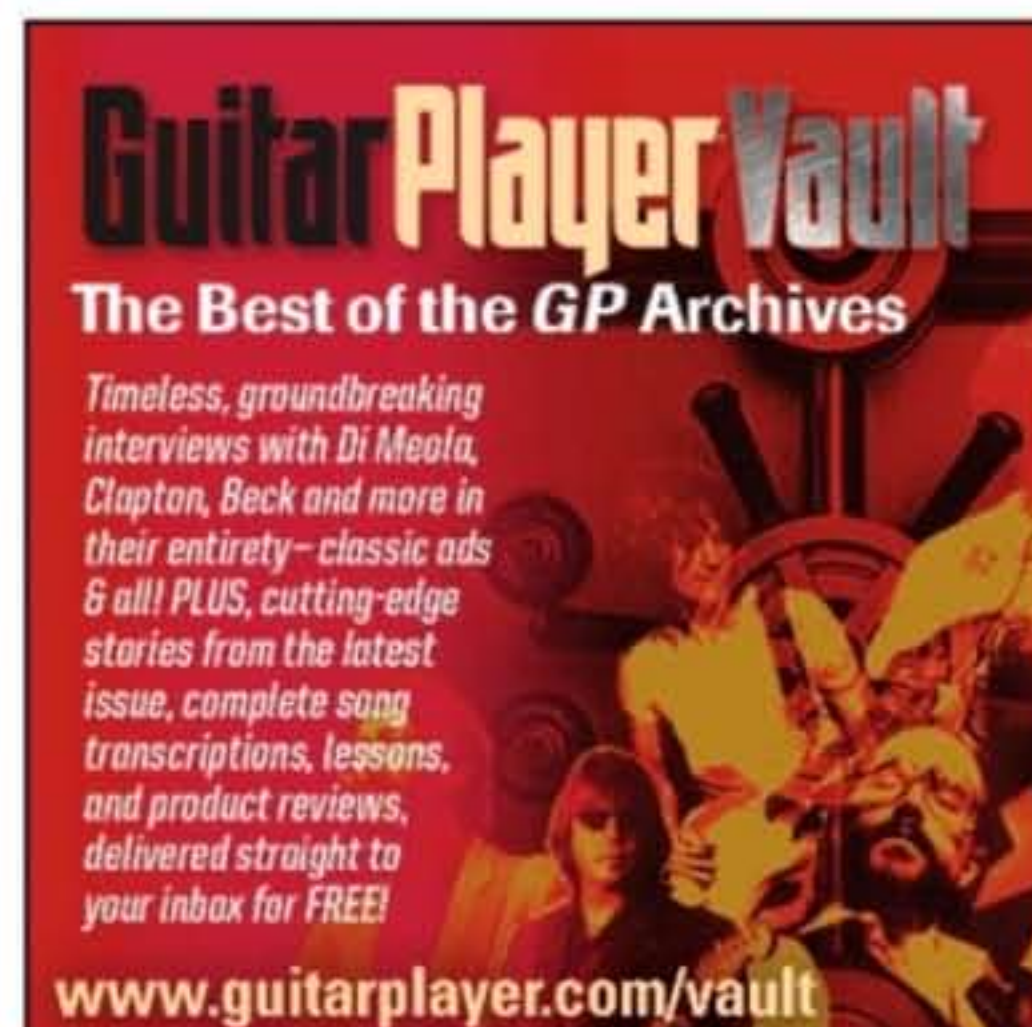
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Over the past 20-plus years with *BASS PLAYER*, Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.

OUTTAKES

Photograph from January 2003

THERE IS A LOT OF ART IN THE WORLD. A LOT OF ART.

It is everywhere. You can hardly walk across the street without stepping on it. There are paintings, and operas, and sandcastles, and poetry, and performances where people smear themselves with peanut butter, and even yodeling. Think of the late, great Slim Whitman.

There are probably even more misunderstandings in the world than art: Road rages, domestic squabbles, mistaken song lyrics, religious wars, sibling spats, abstract paintings inadvertently hung upside down, not to mention all the plain, simple unintelligible speech. Think of the late, great Dr. Hunter S. Thompson.

Relegated to a somewhat fewer number are the categories of misunderstandings which happen as a result of art. I give you Ryan Martinie.

Ryan Martinie is a man of intense fervor. Like fellow bands Slipknot, Kiss, and Gwar, he and the group Mudvayne took metal artistry to a high level, using extreme costuming and makeup for the sake of showmanship. This type of dedication to the craft of spectacle is the exception within the metal genre. Exceptions to norms generally suffer a more difficult path to appreciation. Think of the late, great Vincent Van Gogh. We all know how misunderstood he was.

For the January 2003 *BASS PLAYER* cover, Ryan requested to be photographed under a blacklight in a skin-tight white jumpsuit with white



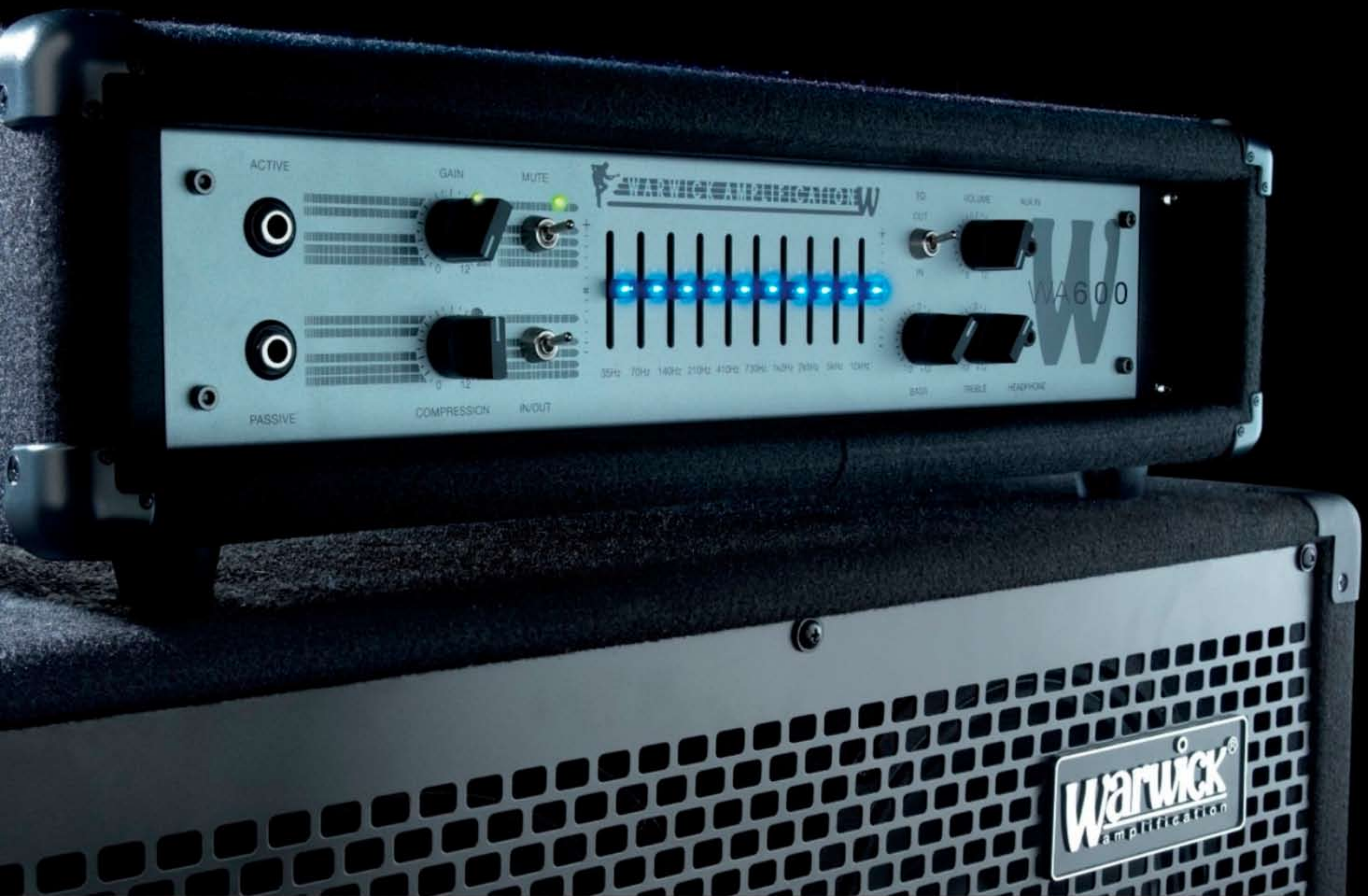
greasepaint covering his skin, which resulted in a creepy, surreal portrait. He arrived at the offices businesslike and completely prepared, with costume and makeup ready, and after an arduous cosmetic session the shoot went down without a hitch, but Ryan wasn't finished. He then wanted to change to completely black facepaint, and a completely red suit.

Since we are such a sophisticated facility, all this costume changing was being done in the common men's bathroom. Ryan was finishing the last touches of black on his face when Editor Bill Leigh walked in, looked Ryan up and down and inquired as to what *exactly* we were doing. Can't blame him, it did look a bit odd—two pasty-complexion guys; one, half naked covered in black grease (no, not me, *Ryan*). Bill listened patiently to the explanation and, turning to walk out, said "not in *my* magazine," leaving in his wake only the *hissss-thud* of the door dampener and the forlorn 60-cycle hum of the fluorescent lights.

Stunned, I looked over at Ryan and suddenly realized he bore an uncanny resemblance to the late (well, just late), Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*, and I understood Bill's remark, which left both Ryan and myself hanging in a lurch. Certainly, there was no racially motivated intent involved; just possibly a poor choice of colors and timing.

Not wanting to be all dressed up with no place to go, we went ahead and got the shoot in the can, but until this day have never published the black-face images. —PAUL HAGGARD

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